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HIGH SCHOOL

THESPIAN

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(See page 12)



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IN THIS ISSUE

THE PLAYER'S
PUNCTUATION MARK

by MIRIAM A. FRANKLIN

SIDNEY HOWARD:
MASTER OF
DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE

by JOSEPH MERSAND

FIVE MAJOR OBLIGA-
TIONS OF THE HIGH
SCHOOL DIRECTOR

by EDWARD A. WRIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHING
YOUR PLAY

by KELLY YEATON

CLARE TREE MAJOR

by N. W. VIOLA

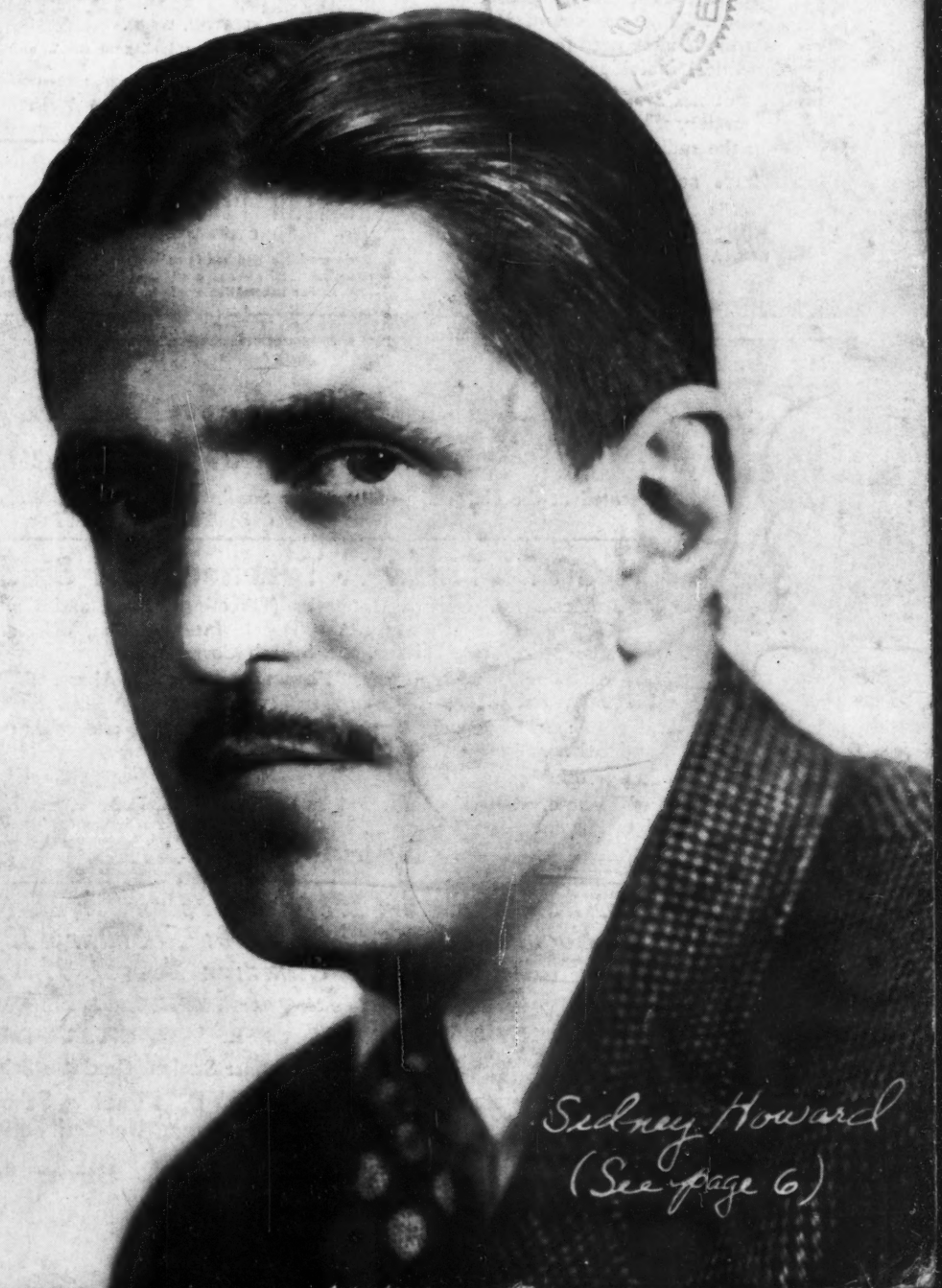
DEMOCRACY
THROUGH DRAMATICS

by MARION F. F. BOOTS

PHOTOPLAY GUIDE TO
MAETERLINCK'S
THE BLUE BIRD

by HAROLD TURNER

DECEMBER, 1939



*Sidney Howard
(See page 6)*

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DECEMBER, 1939

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

CONTENTS FOR DECEMBER, 1939

ARTICLES:

The Player's Punctuation Mark. <i>By Miriam A. Franklin</i>	4
Sidney Howard: Master of Dramatic Technique. <i>By Joseph Mersand</i>	6
Five Major Obligations of the High School Director. <i>By Edward A. Wright</i>	8
Photographing Your Play. <i>By Kelly Yeaton</i>	10
Clare Tree Major. <i>By W. N. Viola</i>	11
Highlights of National Educational Theatre Convention	12
Democracy Through Dramatics. <i>By Marion F. F. Boots</i>	14

DEPARTMENTS:

Broadway at a Glance. <i>By Margaret Wentworth</i>	3
With the Radio Editor. <i>By G. Harry Wright</i>	15
Staging the High School Play (<i>Lavender and Old Lace</i>). <i>By Earl W. Blank</i>	16
Motion Picture Appreciation (<i>The Blue Bird</i>). <i>By Harold Turney</i>	18
The Technical Director's Page. <i>By Leslie Allen Jones</i>	20
On the High School Stage	22
What's New Among Books and Plays. <i>By H. T. Leeper</i>	30
Our Periodicals in Review. <i>By Lotta June Miller</i>	32



1, 3. Lillian and Buddy from *GOING ON SEVENTEEN*, Penn High School, Greenville, Pa. Directed by Mrs. C. D. Kearns. (Thespian Troupe No. 354.) 2. Scene from *320 COLLEGE AVENUE*, Salem, New Jersey, High School. Directed by Miss Marie L. Oehrle. 4. Scene from *WINGS OF THE MORNING*, Harrisburg, Illinois, Township High School. 5. Cast for *SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS* at Stambaugh, Mich., High School. Miss Helen Dunham, director. 6. Cast for *SUBMERGED*, Paonia, Colorado, High School. Directed by Mr. Glen Haley. 7. Uncle Tom from *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* at Penn High School, Greenville, Pa. 8. Scene from the one-act play, *AFTERWARDS*, at Union High School, Willoughby, Ohio. Miss Cleo Sawyer, director. 9. *THE THIRTEENTH CHAIR*, Northeastern High School, Detroit, Mich. Mrs. Joyce M. Osborn, director. 10, 12. Scenes from *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* as staged by Penn High School, Greenville, Pa. Mrs. C. D. Kearns, director. 11. Stage set for *NEW FIRES*, Isaac C. Elston High School, Michigan City, Indiana. Directed by Miss Emily Dickinson.

BROADWAY AT A GLANCE

by MARGARET WENTWORTH

The Man Who Came To Dinner

The Man Who Came To Dinner, by the reliable firm of collaborators, George Kaufman and Moss Hart, was the first outstanding, outselling success of this fall. It amounts to a prolonged practical joke on Alexander Woollcott and one should be fairly well acquainted with his traits to enjoy it to the full; but since his broadcasts have introduced him from coast to coast, few need fail to appreciate it for that reason. His faults and foibles are pretty severely dealt with; but he seems to be able to take it with good humor so we can laugh at it with clear consciences.

Mr. Woollcott is impersonated by Monty Woolley, who accepted a dinner invitation in a mid-western home, fell on the front steps, and remained a fortnight to disrupt the household and arouse disension in one farcical situation after another. Noel Coward and Harpo Marx are also brought in, but if there is any real model for the predatory actress who flies from London to answer Mr. Woolley's long-distance call, the authors aren't telling. Perhaps they think "the female of the species is more deadly than the male" and are afraid to risk her identity being disclosed. They do say, however, that the heroine of the piece, Mr. Woolley's secretary—the actress is the menace—is entirely a fictitious character. While the play must rank as farce, it is written and acted with such brilliance and zest that it has well earned its prosperity.

Ladies and Gentlemen

On the other hand, it is disappointing to see Helen Hayes in a play which doesn't seem good enough for her. This is *Ladies and Gentlemen*, which was written by her husband, Charles MacArthur, in collaboration with Ben Hecht. Miss Hayes in the play goes on the jury in a murder trial fully convinced of the innocence of the defendant. By womanly wiles, not too ethical, she brings the eleven obstinate jurors to her way of thinking. The play is one of those jury pieces which never gets into the court-room. Philip Merivale, a married man on the panel, falls in love with Miss Hayes, but they renounce each other after the brief, enforced association is over. Idyllic in itself, this love affair does not really blend with the coarse humor of the rest of the play and romance and farce seem incongruously stuck together, not woven of one fabric. But many people would go to hear Miss Hayes recite the multiplication table and the play is doing well.

Skylark

Skylark, on the other hand, is a play perfectly tailored to Gertrude Lawrence's

measure and is winning public plaudits accordingly. The plot has a suggestion of Philip Barry's *Holiday*, since Miss Lawrence wants her husband to give up the business in which he has become too absorbed and to take with her the trip they have planned for years. But since *Holiday* we have had a depression which has thrown a new light on giving up business altogether, and solution is found without having recurrence to a South Sea island. Glenn Anders is a brilliant and bibulous lawyer who encourages the skylark to beat her wings against the bars of her cage but who is not surprised at her willingness to remain in it, once she is convinced that she still has her husband's complete devotion.

Time of Your Life

Last spring the Theatre Guild offered a short Saroyan play to its subscribers to fill out a poor season—*My Heart's in the Highlands*. Some of the critics wanted to award it the distinction of being the best play of the year and so divided over it that no award was made by them at all. So the Guild began this year by producing *The Time Of Your Life*, by William Saroyan. He is still very young, just over thirty, born in California of Armenian parents.

Both his plays are innocent of technique and are practically plotless. *The Time Of Your Life* takes you to a "honky-tonk" on the San Francisco water-front to spend an evening. Eddie Dowling, cast as an habitue of the place, is sorry for one of the girls who comes in who seems to him to be capable of better things. His hanger-on, a big, kindly chap, obligingly falls in love with her and the two are to be married at the end of the play. However, this bit of plot is not the chief end of the play. Saroyan introduces characters with whom, no doubt, he is familiar, and brings them to life for us. There is a gorgeous liar of the *Trader Horn* variety; there is a half-starved Negro who proves to be a musician; there is a would-be comedian who is an expert dancer; and Nick, the owner of the place, is kind to them all, proud of the fact that his place has never had a murder and is not used by those who want to prey upon the unfortunate. A policeman philosophizes about his job and a longshoreman utters much homely wisdom. It is a sprawling, formless "slice of life" but has been acclaimed by the critics and is winning popular support. It is significant that those who like it compare it to music. Music appeals directly to the emotions and is capable of being interpreted to suit each fancy of individual hearers.

Margin for Error

In sharp contrast to the formlessness of Saroyan's work is the polished technique displayed by Clare Boothe in her mystery-farce, *Margin for Error*. The most hilarious murder Broadway has seen for many seasons takes place in the play. The German consul in an American town who has been abusing his diplomatic immunity by stirring up bund activities and disseminating slanders, is killed at the end of the first act and everyone feels that "he never will be missed." But the law must act and the people who were shut up with him in his library are in a hard position as he had given each of them occasion to hate him. The Jewish policeman who was sent by a mayor with a mischievous sense of humor to be his bodyguard, is torn between his duty and his dread lest some way many innocent people in Germany should have to suffer as they did after the murder of a German official in France.

Casting, timing and direction are of the best and the play glitters with Miss Boothe's wit, which is oddly less caustic when dealing with murder than when she is writing about her own sex in private life. It will be her third success in as many seasons.

Pastoral

Pastoral is this season's version of one of those happy-go-lucky couples who live in sin in the country, supported by someone else's money—someone who pays bills, answers letters and runs a business which these birds of the air can't be bothered to do. They would be exasperating in real life, but played by Ruth Weston and John Banner they are amusing companions. John Banner is a refugee from Austria and has a reputation in Europe as an actor of romantic parts, though in this play it is his deft handling of the comedy lines and situations which is outstanding.

Too Many Girls

George Abbott's *Too Many Girls* is a musical about football and has the qualities of youth and gayety which we associate with his shows. Marcy Westcott, who was in *The Boys From Syracuse* last year, has the chief feminine role and Richard Kollmar, who was in *Knickerbocker Holiday*, is in love with her. Their duet, "I didn't know what time it was, what day it was, what year it was," is a hit in the show and is no doubt a radio favorite by this time. The humor is pretty broad, which seems a pity. Hal LeRoy is the principal male dancer and Diosa Costello from Puerto Rico is the premiere danseuse.

The Possessed

The Chekhov Theatre made a brief appearance with *The Possessed*, dramatized from Dostoevsky's novel of that name. I mention it because it is an interesting group which is studying the principles of acting of the Moscow Art Theatre under Michael Chekov, nephew of the playwright. He has a permanent studio at Ridgefield, Connecticut.

The Player's Punctuation Mark

by MIRIAM A. FRANKLIN

Director of Dramatics, Grove City College, Grove City, Pa.

THEY "have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not." This splendid prophecy of old can be taken literally as well as figuratively. Many a person prides himself upon being observant. But—!! Do you observe? Do you hear the start—speed up—stop—start again manner in which people speak?

When a person writes, he uses many punctuation marks. But when that same individual speaks, he uses many times many punctuation marks. You are probably thinking: "What are the player's punctuation marks? Where are they? When are they? Why?" And all the rest. Center your attention on the first question: "What are they? By the time we have considered the *what*, the *where*, *when* and *why* of them will probably also be clear.

Punctuation marks are short spaces of time, stop-gaps, placed between ideas as we speak. They are pauses. But—and this is important—a pause is not a *wait*. A pause is inserted, purposely. A pause is filled with visible thought, as when the character tries to think of a name or a word. Or perhaps it is filled with visible action. Or with visible emotion. Sometimes, with all three at once. A *pause* is always placed to help the play. A *wait*, on the other hand, doesn't help; it hinders. Waits cause a play to drag. They are often present by the score because actors fail to pick up cues quickly. Or they may be due to poorly memorized lines, or to slow entrances.

Three kinds of punctuation marks interest the actor. The first is speech-phrases.

Phrasing is the grouping of words into ideas and inserting very short pauses between these groups. In real life we use words in groups, not a single word by itself. When speech is properly phrased, is sounds more natural; the meaning is conveyed more clearly; and the actor is allowed time to breathe easily.

George, the high school boy in Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, says, "Rebecca — you don't know anything —. If the moon were getting nearer — the men that sit up all night with telescopes — would see it first — and they'd tell us about it — and it'd be in all the newspapers."

Since actors often disagree about the correct phrasing for speeches, we can't always say that one is the correct phrasing and any other is incorrect. What we can do, however, is to try to find the meaning of a speech; then phrase it to bring out that meaning.

Olivia in *Twelfth Night* may say, "How say you to that — Malvolio?"

Or she may phrase in this manner: "How say you — to that — Malvolio?" Which is correct? The Duke in the same play may say to Viola, "I have unclasp'd — to thee the book — even of my secret soul." Or he may put it this way: "I — have unclasp'd to thee — the book even of my secret soul." Or, "I have unclasp'd to thee — the book — even of my secret soul." You will need to study a character painstakingly to decide how his lines should be spoken.

The emphasis to be used often determines the length of speech-phrases. In order to make a line very emphatic, you should, probably, shorten the phrases. "I asked them once — to stop eating" would be more emphatic if phrased, "I asked them — once — to stop — eating."

In your work guard against two dangers: first, don't phrase the wrong places and thus bring out a faulty meaning. And, second, don't use too few speech-phrases to convey the full meaning.

The use of speech-phrases is only one kind of punctuation marks. Another, the *time-pause*, is longer. A player inserts time-pauses in order to give himself time to act. A character may need time to think of the right word. Mr. Hale says in *Trifles*, "And then she — laughed. I guess you might call it a laugh." A player often needs also a time-pause for action. Perhaps he is looking over letters, or counting money, or tying his tie. Macbeth says, "How is't with me, when every noise appals me?" He may then pause as he lifts his hands to place them on his forehead. But when he begins to raise them he sees them. He continues speaking. "What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes." In the same scene there must be pauses to listen. Lady Macbeth says, "Hark!" (*pause*) "more knocking." Time-pauses must be long enough in telephone conversations. The effectiveness of telephone conversations is often destroyed because the actor gives too little time to listen to the other person.

Sometimes the actor must cross the stage and take some action while speaking a short line. To phrase the line carefully often helps. Cross the room and sit down while saying, "I'm going to tell you just how it happened." The line is too

This is the third in a series of seven articles by Miss Franklin on acting techniques for high school students. The fourth article will appear in the February issue. Miss Franklin is the author of the new textbook, *Rehearsal* (Prentice-Hall), which we recommend to all teachers and students active in dramatics.—EDITOR.

short for much of a cross. But if you phrase it, "I'm going to tell you —" pause, and walk, and sit; "— just how it happened," there will be plenty of time.

A third kind of punctuation mark is the *dramatic-pause*. Its most common uses are to emphasize ideas, to arouse suspense, and to express emotion.

Dramatic pause gives a word or an idea force. We use it a great deal in real life, but we don't notice our techniques there. Pause for emphasis sometimes is more emphatic if placed before, and at other times following, the important word. If you say, "I can't go" (*pause*) "tonight," the "tonight" is emphasized. You may say, "Tom," (*pause*) "I've told you once," and Tom will understand that you are not going to tell him again. A pause just following the important thought in many instances is quite as emphatic as, "The watch in that case is mine." (*Pause*.)

Dramatic pause you will find most helpful also in creating suspense. The pause often follows a rising questioning inflection in the voice. Juliet's potion scene has many splendid examples.

Juliet: Farewell! (*pause*) God knows where we shall meet again. (*pause*)
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins.
That almost freezes up the here of life;
(*pause*)
I'll call them back again to comfort me:
(*calling*)
Nurse! (*pause*) What should she do here?
(*pause*)

Many other pauses would be used through the scene.

The player must use dramatic pause to show deep feeling. Pause to express emotion should be the most eloquent of all. People in real life pause to express emotion. The more intense the emotion, the longer the pause—usually. We can't set down rules; there are principles, however, which can guide the young player. If your character must show sudden fear, anger, deep love, surprise, grief, joy, or any other emotion, you may be greatly aided by the use of a pause. Prolong the pause until the effect of it sinks into the heart of every listener. The pause must never extend beyond the ability of the player to hold it, nor beyond the needs of the scene. When members of the audience have their attention drawn to the pause, it is bad. Helen must pause to show fear when she says to her son, "Business has its lures, in a way. But there's one anti-lure that you haven't" — (*pause*) "Bert," (*pause*) "there's someone behind that curtain." The following illustrates pause in expressing joy. The parents decide to give Marjorie a trip for her graduation present. They tell her of the plan. She pauses before she speaks, then says, "A trip!" (*pause*) "West." (*pause*) — "I've always wanted to go west." An example of pausing in anger is shown when Bill speaks



Scene from the Shakespearean play, *TWELFTH NIGHT*, as produced by Mr. Eugene R. Wood at Webster Groves, Missouri, High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 191.)

with quiet vengeance to Harry. "You'll pay for this trick!" (pause) "Plenty!" The dramatic effect of many emotions is heightened by the use of dramatic pause.

You have an opportunity to make your acting most impressive if you punctuate carefully. To be apt in the use of pause is a real art. You cannot master the art in a short time, but you will progress through study and practice. Begin by listening to the punctuation people use in real life. Then analyze the why, when, and where of their pauses. Follow this study by practicing the use of pause on your friends when you are at school, at home, or on the street. Finally, study your role to locate what punctuation marks will be most effective. But, again I warn you: a *pause* is not a *wait*. Pauses must convey only the correct meaning and feeling; pauses are inserted for one purpose only, to help the play.

The following is an excerpt from Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird*. Study it carefully to find the different opportunities for the use of pause. The beauty of dramatic literature is felt only when the lines are read beautifully and with the greatest meaning.

THE BLUE BIRD

BY MAURICE MAETERLINCK
(Act II, Sc. 2)

Mytyl and her brother Tytyl, after searching far and wide for the Blue Bird to take back to the fairy, find it living near their long-departed grandparents, Granny Tyl and Gaffer Tyl, in the Land of Memory.

TYLTYL (observing with amazement that the blackbird is quite blue): But he's blue! Why, that's the bird, the Blue Bird which I am to take back to the Fairy. And you never told us that you had him here! Oh, he's blue, blue, blue as a blue glass marble! (Entreatingly) Grandad, Granny, will you give him to me?

GAFFER TYL: Yes, perhaps, perhaps. What do you think, Granny Tyl?

GRANNY TYL: Certainly, certainly. What use is he to us? He does nothing but sleep. We never hear him sing.

TYLTYL: I will put him in my cage. I say, where is my cage? Oh, I know, I left it behind the big tree. (He runs to the tree, fetches the cage and puts the blackbird into it.) So, really, you've really given him to me? How pleased the Fairy will be! And Light too!

GAFFER TYL: Mind you, I won't answer for the bird. I'm afraid that he will never get used again to the restless life up there and that he'll come back here by the first wind that blows. However, we shall see. Leave him there, for the present, and come and look at the cow.

TYLTYL (noticing the hives): And how are the bees getting on?

GAFFER TYL: Oh, pretty well. They are no longer alive, as you call it up there; but they work steadily.

TYLTYL (going up to the hives): Oh, yes! I can smell the honey! How heavy the hives must be! All the flowers are so beautiful! And my little dead sisters, are they here too?

MYTYL: And where are my three little brothers who were buried? (At these words, seven little Children, of different sizes, like a set of Pan's pipes, come out of the cottage, one by one.)

GRANNY TYL: Here they are, here they are! As soon as you think of them, as soon as you speak of them, they are there, the darlings! (Tytyl and Mytyl run to meet the Children. They hustle and hug one another and dance and whirl about and utter screams of joy.)

TYLTYL: Hulloo, Pierrot! (They clutch each other by the hair.) Ah, so we're going to fight again, as in the old days! And Robert! I say, Jean, what's become of your top? Madeleine and Pierrette and Pauline! And here's Riquette!

MYTYL: Oh, Riquette, Riquette! She's still crawling on all fours!

GRANNY TYL: Yes, she has stopped growing.

TYLTYL (noticing the little dog yelping around them): There's Kiki, whose tail I cut off with Pauline's scissors. He hasn't changed either.

GAFFER TYL (sententiously): No, nothing changes here.

TYLTYL: And Pauline still has a pimple on her nose!

GRANNY TYL: Yes, it won't go away; there's nothing to be done for it.

TYLTYL: Oh, how well they look, how fat and sleek they are!

GRANNY TYL: They have been much better since they ceased living. There's nothing more to fear, nobody is ever ill, one has no anxiety. (The clock inside the cottage strikes eight.)

GRANNY TYL (amazed): What's that?

GAFFER TYL: I don't know, I'm sure. It must be the clock.

GRANNY TYL: It can't be. It never strikes.

GAFFER TYL: Because we no longer think of the time. Was any one thinking of the time?

TYLTYL: Yes, I was. What is the time?

GAFFER TYL: I'm sure I can't tell. I've forgotten how. It struck eight times, so I suppose it's what they call eight o'clock up there.

TYLTYL: Light expects me at a quarter to nine. It's because of the Fairy. It's most important. I'm off!

GRANNY TYL: Don't leave us like that, just as supper's ready! Quick, quick let's lay the table outside. I've got some capital cabbage-soup and a beautiful plum-tart. (They get out the table, dishes, plates, etc., and lay for supper outside the door, all helping.)

TYLTYL: Well, as I've got the Blue Bird—And then it's so long since I tasted cabbage-soup. Ever since I've been travelling. They don't have it at the hotels.

GRANNY TYL: There! That didn't take long! Sit down, children. Don't let us lose time, if you're in a hurry. (They have lit the lamp and served the soup. The Grandparents and the Children sit down round the table, jostling and elbowing one another and laughing and screaming with pleasure.)

TYLTYL (eating like a glutton): How good it is! Oh, how good it is! I want some more! More! (He brandishes his wooden spoon and noisily hits his plate with it.)

GAFFER TYL: Come, come, a little more quiet. You're just as ill behaved as ever; and you'll break your plate.

TYLTYL (half-raising himself on his stool): I want more, more! (He seizes the tureen, drags it toward him and upsets it and the soup, which trickles over the table and down upon their knees and scalds them. Yells and screams of pain.)

Sidney Howard: Master of Dramatic Technique

by JOSEPH MERSAND

Department of English, Boys High School, Brooklyn, New York

ON August 23, Sidney Howard was crushed to death by a tractor, which he had been cranking and which started suddenly. Thus, at the comparatively early age of forty-eight, at the height of his literary powers, with one play ready to be produced and a second in the process of creation, the life of one of America's most courageous playwrights was ignominiously destroyed by one of man's unpredictable machines.

The American theatre can ill afford to carry on without a personality such as Howard possessed. As President of the Dramatists' Guild and as a member of the Playwrights' Company, he demonstrated his leadership in affairs of men and art. He could combine the creativity of the artist and the practicality of the executive to the greater good of our contemporary drama.

Howard was a truly American dramatist. His plays were startling illuminations of life that was typically American, whether it was representative of the California wine-growers in *They Knew What They Wanted* or of New England liberals in *The Ghost of Yankee Doodle*. Unlike dramatists who confine their plays to special areas—compare Elmer Rice and his New York law offices—Howard wrote of many sections of the country. But Howard's characters, so different and yet so much alive, stand out among the thousands of characters who have led their brief existence on the New York stage. At the beginning of the 1939 dramatic season, *They Knew What They Wanted*, Pulitzer Prize winner for 1924-1925, was revived for a successful run. The moving picture, starring Edward G. Robinson, was one of Hollywood's best character studies.

Shortly his screen version of *Gone With the Wind* will make its long-heralded appearance. The Playwrights' Company is producing his last play, *Madam, Will You Walk?*—and his dramatization of Carl Van Doren's *Benjamin Franklin*, on which he was working before he died, will be completed by another dramatist.

Howard plays do not have the poetical beauty of Sherwood Anderson's, or the psychological probings of O'Neill's. It might be said that the man was greater than his plays. His lasting influence on American drama will be assured not because he created new dramatic devices like masks or asides or a new language of the theatre. Somehow, the American drama felt that Howard was playing an important part in it even though he did not write a play for several seasons. As President of the Dramatists' Guild

he fought for the rights of creative artists, encouraged new playwrights, gave freely of his time and energy for any good cause of the theatre, and proved that a creative artist could also be a man of affairs.

Nor can it be denied that he was probably the most skillful adapter and translator of plays of our time. His dramatizations of Paul De Kruif's episode from *Microbe Hunters* to *Yellow Jack*, Sinclair Lewis' *Dodsworth*, and Humphrey Cobb's *Paths of Glory* are probably the most brilliant in the last decade. Numerous translations from French, Spanish, and the Hungarian came from his pen. Altogether twenty-three of his works—original plays, dramatizations, and adaptations—were presented since 1921—when *Swords* ushered in his career.

Who could have prophesied what Howard would become from observing his first play? Strange indeed was his choice of subject after his other ventures into journalism. He wrote a series of studies of the industrial spy system for the *New Republic*, shortly after he returned from the Great War after serving first in an ambulance unit in the Balkans and later in the air force. Then he studied the illicit trade in narcotics. This was followed by an assignment to cover a coal miners' strike in Pennsylvania.

The subject matter for his first play was as far removed from labor spies, narcotic rings, or coal strikes as could be. *Swords* was a richly poetic drama of Italian background. The war-weary public did not care much for the drama of a beautiful lady held captive in a castle by a German noble of evil intentions, although Robert Edmond Jones created beautiful costumes and settings. Clare Eames, who played the heroine, married the dramatist shortly after the play closed.

Three adaptations followed in quick succession. They were *S. S. Tenacity*, *Casanova*, and *Sancho Panza*. Howard tried his hand once again at poetic drama, this time with Edward Sheldon, one of the outstanding American dramatists of the early years of the twentieth century. *Bewitched* failed.

Having been born and raised in California, Howard was fully prepared to lend scenic and character verisimilitude

to his next play, *They Knew What They Wanted* (1924), which surprised him, the critics, and the play-goers when it nosed out *What Price Glory?* for the Pulitzer Prize. It was characteristic of Howard's artistic integrity that he admitted that *They Knew What They Wanted* was "shamelessly, consciously, and even proudly derived from the legend of Tristram and Yseult." He declared that he did not think that "the age service stripes of a story have anything much to do with its eligibility for present purposes."

The story *They Knew What They Wanted* was not invented. As a youth Howard had learned of it directly in its original setting in the Napa Valley in California. Howard captured the atmosphere and the speech of his characters with an accuracy which has marked all his plays.

The following year *Lucky Sam McCarver* revealed Howard's versatility as a recorder of manners and speech of utterly different characters. Whereas Amy, the heroine of his first play, has been a waitress, his second heroine stems from New York society. His hero is not an Italian wine-grower, but Lucky Sam McCarver, successful proprietor of a night club. The marriage of these two strangely dissimilar persons could not succeed and Carlotta finally dies from heart disease after her physical and social decline. Howard wrote the part of Carlotta for his wife, Clare Eames, and his next play gave her another opportunity to display her talents. *Ned McCobb's Daughter* was a bootlegging drama, one of many of the Prohibition Era, but one of the few of any merit. His next play, *The Silver Cord* (1926), was a mordant study of selfish mother love which was later made into a most effective moving picture.

Salvation (1928), written in collaboration with Charles MacArthur, was based on the life of Aimee Semple McPherson, famous evangelist of Los Angeles. Like so many biographical plays of which the living characters are more interesting than the dramatic representation, *Salvation* failed and closed after thirty-one performances. *Olympia* (1928), *Marseilles* (1930), and *The Late Christopher Bean* (1932) were all translations. *Half Gods* (1929), was another study of marital difficulties, which added nothing to Howard's stature as a playwright. *Alien Corn* (1933) represented life in a small college town with an eternal triangle situation among a music teacher, the college president and his unloved wife. The situation is resolved when the teacher leaves her love and resumes her career. The production was made memorable by the presence of Katharine Cornell. The dramatizations of *Dodsworth* (1934), *Yellow Jack* (1934) and *Paths of Glory* (1935) were almost original works of art. Howard has written prefaces to most of his published plays and his comments on dramatized novels are eminently worth studying. *Ode to Liberty* was another adaptation from the French.

Contemporary American Dramatists

This is the third in a series of seven articles by Dr. Mersand on contemporary American dramatists. The four dramatists to be discussed in forthcoming issues will be, in the order named, Robert Sherwood, Paul Green, Philip Barry, and Rachel Crothers.
—EDITOR.

His last play before his tragic death was *The Ghost of Tankee Doodle* (1937), a study of a liberal family facing the on-rushing destructive forces of our perilous times. Throughout, Howard's characters preserved their sanity and tolerance amid a world slowly being undermined by insanity and intolerance.

In summing up Howard's contributions to American drama, we notice the following: His mastery of the technique of the theatre was almost unique. He knew about all there is to be known about technique. Any man who can turn a chapter of a collection of biographies of scientists into one of the ten best plays of the year is a technical genius. His style of writing is not easily distinguished like that of Noel Coward, Chekhov, Shaw, Maxwell Anderson or Eugene O'Neill. But his sincerity and vigor is ever present. In one scene in *Half Gods* the heroine slaps the hero, who responds with a crack in the jaw that knocks her out cold. There is no subtlety about Howard's characters or his manner of presenting them. And this vigor of writing was really the vigor of the man himself. For Howard was capable of superhuman efforts. Tragically he met his death while preparing to harrow a twenty-eight-acre field as relaxation after a morning of writing. Howard wrote in the dramatic form with such ease that on occasion he belittled the difficulties of his craft. In the preface to *Lucky Sam McCarver* he wrote:

"The dramatist—what, after all, is he but a vicarious actor who happens to write well enough to be useful to real actors? Set him up among real literary men and he cuts a sorry figure."

Howard's plays may not possess the haunting imagery and tonal beauty of Anderson's masterworks, but when presented, possess such verisimilitude and vitality that his stage-world is the real world, and the extra-theatre world, unreal and imitative.

Howard has not left us any world-shaking ideas. He has preached very few sermons. Unlike Behrman he has not polished his dialogue until the words of the butlers and chambermaids glitter. He did not write to prove anything. "The drama," he said, "does not spring from a literary impulse, but from a love of the brave, ephemeral, beautiful art of acting. . . . The best that any dramatist can hope is that his play may prove a worthy vehicle." His plays gave some of the greatest actors and actresses of our time splendid opportunities for displaying their individual capabilities: Katharine Cornell, Clare Eames, Laura Hope Crews, Pauline Lord, Alfred Lunt, Richard Bennett, Walter Huston, and Walter Connolly.

Perhaps Howard may have lacked that divine inspiration which only the Olympians of any art possess. But his plays provided some of the most exciting evenings in the theatre of the past twenty years.

Sidney Howard

A Few Personal Memories by BARRETT H. CLARK

(As broadcast over Station WOR, New York City, September 2, 1939)

I CANNOT THINK of Sidney Howard in the past tense: I never knew any man who was so utterly alive. The mere fact of his presence among us, even the comforting knowledge that he was somewhere, working, or playing, or tending his garden, was enough to renew one's courage in moments of doubt. He was to me a symbol of the fundamental sanity of things. The tall figure, habitually dressed in gray tweeds, the blue eyes that looked through you, the musical voice, that queer habit of sudden silences, his startling way of throwing an idea at you when you least expected it—such are a few of my impressions of the physical man.

But these bare words can't convey much—so let me try again: the scene is my office. He has come to meet a promising young writer whose play I had sent him the day before. "I like your show," he shot out at the young man. "You need cash? Sure you do. I'll let you have some. Lunch with me today—one o'clock—Harvard Club." Next morning the boy had a job. How characteristic this swift course of action! Impulse, decision, action: that was his way. Of all the letters he wrote me few were dated: yesterday and tomorrow somehow didn't seem to exist. Now one more memory: he had come to our home in the country one weekend to finish a play. He sat in a large wing-chair near the window, a script in one hand and a pad of note-paper in the other. My young daughters sat on the floor before him, playing. My wife and I urged "Uncle Sidney," as the youngsters called him, to shoo them away if they bothered him, but Uncle Sidney only looked at us solemnly, picked up the younger child and plumped her on his knee. She lay there happily half an hour as her big friend went on working. His silence spoke to us: "I love children, and you know it blame well. If I want these kids sitting all over me, that's my headache!"

His love of children was only a part of his abounding love of the whole visible, tangible, exciting world. He enjoyed, heard, touched, felt life more passionately than any other man I ever knew. He could not weigh the practical consequences of any action once he had made up his mind to it; he didn't know the meaning of tact as that word is usually understood; he was no diplomat, and time and again, in his big simple fashion he antagonized those who couldn't understand his way. He was without mental reservations. Something needed doing: how shall we do it? Let's do it. That is how his mind worked.

I first met him twenty years ago on his return from France, where he had seen active service as captain of an air bombing squadron. The War over, he needed to be up and doing. In twenty-four hours we had started writing a play together; in another twenty-four we had begun fighting against the suppression of *Jurgen*, and in intervals, at his apartment, we were arguing over the merits of ancient French music, modern German painting, and American beer. The writing of that play, incidentally, proved to me that he was a playwright, and I was not.

Of his amazing activities what can I hope to say? He was a gifted linguist; he wrote respectable verse and short stories; he investigated the labor spy racket and the narcotics ring; he reviewed books, plays and pictures; he was always in the vanguard against every threat to the freedom of expression. After he got into his stride as a successful playwright his interests were more directly focussed upon the theater, and it was inevitable that a man with his capacity for leadership should find himself in the thick of every fight affecting the material welfare of the playwright. As president of the Dramatists' Guild during a critical period of its existence, he sacrificed two years of his time and led his fellow-workers to victory.

Sidney Howard would have been the first to laugh at me for trying to make him out a hero or a saint. Let me tell you then about his failings: his almost blatant sincerity led him often into conflict with others; and he had the gift of flaming anger. Once, long ago, he was furious with me, but some good instinct prompted me to stand up to him. Next day he stalked into my office, looking a foot taller than usual; silently he lifted me out of my chair, took me across the street, sat me down at the bar, and with a shy smile I could not resist, said quietly, "Howard was wrong, I guess." (That was an amusing trick of his, calling himself Howard: it was as near as he ever came to being devious!) He rarely said thank you, or acknowledged a letter—not when you expected it, but a week, or a year later he would remind you and convey, with an exquisite if belated sense of fitness, his gratitude. Such were the only weaknesses of this man that I ever saw. He may have had others—in a way I hope he had.

The irrelevant and meaningless accident that killed him a few days ago just before his new comedy was to go into rehearsal ("Damn bad playwrighting," is what he would have called it), has indeed deprived those closest to him of his bodily presence, and in the face of this personal tragedy there is nothing I can say. If this man had not been able, through his art, to communicate something of his radiant personality to the world, there would be no point in my speaking at all. I believe that Sidney Howard would have given us finer plays than any he had yet written, but we cannot be sure. We do know, however, that he became one of the leaders of our new adult American drama, brought it vigor, honesty, intelligence, and beauty by impressing upon it the mark of his own character: we can feel on every page he wrote the clear and steady wind of freedom that gave him sustenance. Each of his plays was born of a powerful impulse to capture living men and women and throw them (as he once phrased it) alive into the theater. In his work we can see and feel and hear the playwright proclaiming aloud his faith in the integrity and dignity of the human animal.

I believe that those of us who through him shared some of his inexhaustible love of life will agree that to him more than to most it was given to communicate to all who have ears to listen some precious part of what made him what he was.



Scene from the production of *PROLOGUE TO GLORY* as staged by Miss Florence M. Rees at Twin Falls, Idaho, High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 256.)

Five Major Obligations of the High School Director*

by EDWARD A. WRIGHT

Director of Drama, Denison University, Granville, Ohio.

THOSE of us who have had anything to do with handling high school drama know full well that it is a man-sized job in itself and consists of far more than class-room work. Only we can realize the hours of physical labor, to say nothing of the conferences, interviews, and guidance program, all of which are so necessary a part of the dramatic director's responsibility.

But it is my desire now to cite a few concrete examples of what I believe to be the obligations of the high school director of dramatics. Let me emphasize, however, that these are wholly personal beliefs which I have based on two personal experiences.

First: My conclusion after eight years of high school and junior college dramatic direction, during which time I tried to meet these obligations, and

Second: What I wish might have been done in high school for those students who have come to me during my two years as director of drama at the university.

Certainly it is not necessary to spend even a moment in propounding the worth of dramatics as a means of developing personality, voice and bodily control and in giving a general cultural background. And thanks to the many really good teachers in the field it is becoming less and less necessary to offer arguments along

this line to superintendents, principals and school boards. Our whole field is definitely on the upgrade, for its values are being recognized more and more each year.

But if we are to keep it going in the right direction we must, through our state organizations and in every way possible and on every occasion, emphasize the extreme injustice being done in many schools by permitting everyone from the athletic coach to the janitor to produce the plays merely because he happens to have the eighth period open. Music and athletics, civics and mathematics, literature and history each require a certain amount of training and it is up to us to show the public that at least an equal amount of training is necessary for those who would use this powerful tool of dramatics and through it shape the personalities of the students, as well as furnish the community with its dramatic entertainment—a product that every community in the world has demanded in some form or other as far back as history records.

And by way of introduction I might place that obligation well up on the list of personal duties to our profession; a never-ending attack on the false belief that "anybody can put on a play." This is our professional obligation!

And now to our personal obligation within the school itself. I have tried by way of organization to place them under the five headings already mentioned.

First: What is my duty to the student himself? On this point I firmly believe that our first and major obligation is the teaching of appreciation. We know full well that with all the training in the world there are many students who could never make even passable amateur actors, but there is a very small percent whose appreciation of the drama cannot be greatly increased through the conscientious work of a drama teacher. And that sharpened appreciation will increase in its effectiveness as the years go by; reacting in a constant demand for better dramatic performances in both the amateur and professional field.

And let me emphasize that we must teach the majority of our students to appreciate drama as consumers, and teach them to enjoy it in its broader sense and its many aspects.

First: Drama is an art form, for it is the meeting ground of all the arts. Here, alone, dancing, music, literature, architecture, painting and sculpturing go hand in hand. As a fine art in itself it stretches back over an illustrious past to the very beginning of history. This fact we must make the student know and appreciate.

Second: Drama is a literary form. Here one of our chief problems is to make the student understand that our own modern realistic style is but a single type rather than the whole theatre of past and present. We must teach our people to use a different measuring stick on romantic, realistic and classic traditions. We must teach them to distinguish between comedy, farce, melodrama and tragedy. We must interest them in the evolution of at least a few of the many varied types of drama over its 3,000 years.

Next we must make them appreciate the drama as a positive means of spending their leisure time, either as a member of the audience or as an active participant in its production.

* Presented before the high school section of The American Educational Theatre Association, Cleveland, Ohio, December, 1938.

I have received more comment from high school students on the six weeks period I gave each year to dramatic criticism than any other single phase of the year's work. After graduation many have come to me with thanks for that training which consisted of three weeks on stage criticism and three weeks of movie criticism. They have told me that it gave them something concrete which they could use during their whole life in measuring the value of their dramatic fare. And just a word might here be said about the motion pictures. Much as we may dislike to admit it, the movies are here to stay. They are the theatre of our high school students and it behooves us as teachers of drama to do something constructive in our criticism of them. But we should likewise make some effort to keep the students abreast of what is going on in the *legitimate theatre today*, in both the professional and amateur fields. We must make them understand its hugeness as an institution, for too often they measure the theatre by their own class-play. We must encourage them to read modern plays and to be acquainted with the personalities of the stage as well as movie idols.

For those who actively participate in dramatics we have many additional obligations. All students should be given a well-rounded knowledge of the theatre. The best actor should sometime be given a back-stage job, for it is extremely bad to let any student feel that there is only one side to the theatre—be it acting or technical work. And it naturally follows that those persistent back-stage workers with acting aspirations must in some way be rewarded.

Those who play the leads and suddenly find themselves "skyrocketed" into local fame must be adequately counseled to avoid the calamity that so often befalls that adolescent who suddenly becomes "stage-struck", "high hat" and the "bane of the principal's existence" because he has "strutted his hour upon the stage" and received a rave notice in the school paper.

It is our solemn duty to see that our students do not slight their work in other departments. This is an easy thing for them to do and we must ever remind ourselves that with us they find both recreation and creation in their education.

We must produce plays that are not too advanced but yet that present a challenge to the student. We must cast wisely so that the final performance will allow each student to find some personal satisfaction and growth in his own work.

We should avoid type casting in so far as it is possible.

We must strive to improve the vocal and physical properties of the student in his everyday life.

We must fully realize that each student will carry something of every part he plays into his everyday life and that the old saying "we are a part of all we meet" might logically become "we are a part of every part we play" when applied to high

OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

What occupational opportunities are open to students with dramatic talent? This vitally important question will be answered by Francis Weaver in a series of forthcoming articles prepared under the supervision of Teachers College, Columbia University. Each article presents valuable information every teacher and student of dramatics should know. Look for the first of these interesting and timely discussions in the next number of this magazine (issue of February 1).

school dramatics. Who of us cannot cite half a dozen examples of students who have completely altered their personalities after their first important role in the junior class play. Here, then, lies one of our greatest responsibilities.

A final obligation to the student, which I personally feel and have tried without exception to follow, is one on which there is much disagreement, but nevertheless I feel it is always my duty to discourage at every point any professional aspirations on the part of the student. If in spite of that discouragement he enters the professional theatre—and he will if he has the stuff it will take when he gets there, then he can never say that it was I who encouraged him to enter that profession which furnishes a smaller amount of success than any other. I can think of nothing that would cause me more personal worry than to know that through my advice some of my students were "making the rounds" on Broadway, knowing as I do the problems and the disappointments that face some thousands of young people there every day of the world. But as I have said, this is a very personal obligation, and rests entirely with the individual teacher.

Next: What is my duty to the audience? This question is perhaps not as difficult to answer as it is on the college level. In high school there is usually no effort to compete with the professional theatre. The plays are simpler and justly so for they should not be over the heads of the audience any more than of the actors. They should meet the needs of the community.

Excellent as a certain play might be as a piece of literature and perfectly as it may be produced, after weeks of work it might utterly fail because that particular community was not educated to it. This, we all know, is the first great stumbling block of the teacher just out of college with a laudable ambition to raise the dramatic standard in a community with the first play. Audiences can be educated and levels of appreciation raised, but it is a long process. It takes time and hard work and many disappointments, but that, too, is a duty of the dramatic director.

Third: What is my duty to the school?

Our work is the school's work and the school is responsible to two groups: those who will complete their formal education with high school and those who will continue their education in college. In drama we must equip these two groups in such a way as to uphold the value of our own department and the standing of the school in the community as well as in the col-

leges where these students will go.

Again I am convinced that as a curricular or extra-curricular subject the teaching of the drama should take on a genuinely academic atmosphere. This can only be accomplished by demanding as much effort and work outside of the classroom as they are expected to give any other subject.

Students should have some knowledge of stage history. They should be taught the ordinary conventions of stage deportment. Directions should be explained when given in a play so that the student might know the "why" as well as the "how".

The student's powers of observation should be cultivated so that he might in turn contribute to his ability in the creating of a character.

The rudiments of character analysis and development should be emphasized.

Emphasis should be given memory work and some knowledge of the more famous names and plays of the theatre should be acquired.

On the other hand, we should realize that our department is but one phase of the whole high school program, and that it is nothing less than criminal for us to take a student out of another department to work in our own. We dare not monopolize his time.

And finally, in our duty to the school we must always make the proper balance between *educational dramatics* and *satisfactory production*. Without the former we are losing our principal excuse for having the theatre in the school, and without the latter we are not being fair to the theatre, to the student, or to ourselves.

Fourth: What is my duty to the theatre?

Here it is certainly our duty to show the entire student body in no uncertain terms that the theatre is not a playhouse, that in accepting a part the student takes on a responsibility; that his promptness and presence at every rehearsal is a foregone conclusion; and that tardiness or absence is an unforgivable and unpardonable sin in the theatre.

The director must make other students understand that work here is as serious as in any classroom, and that preparation in the way of learning lines and practice outside the regular rehearsal period, as well as absolute discipline in rehearsal, is expected of every member of the cast.

We must emphasize that the theatre is no place for the dabbler.

That acting is not easy; that it takes hours of rehearsal, observation and study and that many have spent a lifetime learning how it is done.

That a play should *not* be given merely as a money-making scheme, but should grow out of the combined inspirations of playwright, director, technicians and actors.

That the theatre in its true sense has never been a means of exploiting oneself.

For it is our duty to develop at least a

(Continued on page 17)

Photographing Your Play

by KELLY YEATON

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IT is little wonder that theatre workers treasure photographs of the plays they have worked on. . . . Often they are the only permanent things left by the evanescent medium of the stage. And aside from their sentimental value, the photographs are invaluable and convenient records of plays, casts, scenery, costumes, and properties.

Stage photography has many ramifications, some of which involve most difficult technical problems, but the job of recording a play effectively is quite simple and does not require the services of a professional. Indeed, unless you can obtain a professional with considerable theatrical knowledge, it is safer to do a little experimentation and learn to do your own photography.

In regard to equipment, we will make two categories. First, a minimum kit, almost foolproof in operation, producing pictures that are good, clear and sharp, adequate for reproduction, although lacking stage atmosphere.

MINIMUM. Standard box or folding camera; a tripod or other solid support for it; a hand-operated reflector for photo-flash bulbs; a supply of Eastman Super XX film or Agfa Superpan Press, and a supply of flash bulbs. The camera should take a picture $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ inches or larger.

An advanced kit consists of equipment adequate for producing the best possible pictures of any ordinary play, excepting only pictures of fast action, which should be left to expert professionals. This kit is more expensive to buy, more difficult to use, less expensive to operate, and is limited in quality of work only by the operators' ability.

ADVANCED. Camera with a focusing f.4.5 lens of some standard make, using $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ inch film or larger; tripod; exposure meter, photo-electric or visual extinction type; two large photoflood reflectors with No. 2 photoflood bulbs and cable

enough to connect them to outlets. Supply of Super XX or Superpan Press film. The addition of flashbulbs will allow you to take flash pictures as with the minimum kit by using them in the photoflood reflectors.

Preparation: Watch the play, notebook in hand, looking for the effective pictures, and dramatic moments. Consult the director beforehand, so that you know what to watch for. Do not allow yourself to be carried away by the play, but concentrate intensely on your problem. Remember that positions of secondary characters can always be changed for purposes of the picture, with the directors' permission. Each time you see a picture, note down the line closest to it, the setting it is on, and have an assistant note the characters concerned and their costumes. From this list make up a shooting script, arranging the shots in an order which will reduce technical work to a minimum. If you shoot after a show or dress rehearsal take all shots on the final set and in the final costumes first, thereby saving the time necessary for shifting. And on the last setting to shoot, take the large group scenes first, in order to release the bit players. Be sure to include at least one shot with everyone on the cast on stage, if it is possible, as well as one of a curtain call. Maids and butlers may ordinarily be arbitrarily brought on stage in a big group scene. An extra copy of this shooting script for the stage manager and property crew will often speed things up.

After the audience has left, if you are shooting after the show, open the curtains, have the electrician remove all mediums from the stage lights, and place your camera. Put it on the tripod and set it in such a position that the finder shows most of the stage area. Except in the case of a very long, low proscenium opening, none of it should show in the finder. In any case, none of it should show in

the finished print, if you wish to maintain the illusion of reality. Instructions to this effect may be given to the photo-finisher if it is impossible to keep the proscenium out of the finder. The camera should not be below the level of the stage floor, and preferably should be three or four feet above that level. It may be necessary to put a platform or table-top across the backs of a couple of rows of seats to use as a camera platform. If you have a focusing lens, measure the distance to the center of the stage and set the lens at this distance. If you are using the minimum kit and flash-bulbs this is all the preparation you need. You are ready to shoot.

If you are using the advanced kit you are ready to balance your lighting. Take a piece of medium blue gelatin and look at the stage through it. Adjust your stage lights for the atmosphere of the production. The gelatin will show you approximately what you will get in your picture. Now take a reading with your exposure meter from the face of an actor standing on the stage. If the exposure indicated is more than two seconds at f.4.5 replace lamps in your first border with photo-flash bulbs until this amount of light is reached. Often one No. 2 bulb center stage is sufficient. (Remember that it draws 500 watts.) Observe that through the gelatin you can see no detail in the shadows. Place one of your reflectors beside the camera and turn it on. If your shadows are still black turn on the second one. If necessary they may be moved closer to the stage. Do not place them much below a line from the lens to the actors' faces. Now take a final exposure meter reading, set your camera and proceed. With a f.4.5 lens it is best to re-focus the camera for each shot, measuring to the center of interest, although it may be left focussed center stage. With a deep stage, or if you are closer than fifteen feet, use the f.6.3 stop.

The method of shooting is simple but important. Tell the cast the line. Have them start several lines earlier and play through it. When you see the picture you want, say "Hold it!" The cast will "freeze," look over your picture, say "Drop it," rearrange your characters so they are all visible or make a better picture, and try it again. If it looks all right, say "Drop it! We'll take next time." Let them play it to your selected point, say "Hold it!" and immediately open the shutter. If you are using flash-bulbs, the click of the shutter is the signal for your assistant to fire the flash, upon which you immediately close the shutter and say "Drop it!" Otherwise you merely keep the shutter open for the required length of time, close it, and say "Drop it!" Always use the same commands, or you may have some pictures spoiled. Watch carefully for movement while the shutter is open. If much is visible take the shot over.

If this method of posing is properly used it will produce the best possible pictures, with the vitality and life of action and the composition of posed shots.



ROMEO AND JULIET, a production of the Drama Department, University of Washington, Seattle, Wash.

Clare Tree Major

by W. N. VIOLA

Director of Dramatics, Pontiac Senior High School, Pontiac, Michigan

CLARE TREE MAJOR is a gracious gray haired middle-aged lady, who finds no pleasure in the gay life which belongs to the pretenders in the theatre. She is deeply interested in good drama well produced for children.

In an interview with Mildred Harrington she demonstrates her understanding and love of her chosen career.

"Children are at once the most responsive and the most exacting of audiences. They are responsive because they are spilling over with the spirit of play, which makes it natural for them to enter heartily into a performance.

"Adults often come to the theatre with a sort of I-dare-you-to-entertain-me attitude. Youngsters never do. In imagination at least, they are on the stage, taking part in what is going on. Sometimes they forget entirely that they are spectators, and actually take a hand in the show by calling out excited suggestions to a favorite character who is in a tight place.

"I said that children are exacting. This is because no actor who gives a half-hearted performance can get by with them. And the amusing part of it is, children are much less likely than adults to get the illusion of reality from what happens on the stage. To little folks, what takes place beyond the footlights is indeed a play—a gorgeous game in which everybody must do his share with whole-souled enthusiasm. For example, when I take the part of a witch, the children don't want to be convinced that I am really a witch. They simply want to feel that I'm playing for all I'm worth at being a witch.

"People are often surprised when they learn that our company is composed of adults. I have to remind them that nearly all fairy tales and stories for children have only adult characters—the handsome Prince, the beautiful Princess, the cruel Stepmother, the wicked Magician, and so on. When children play among themselves, nobody wants to be a little boy or a little girl.

"Children have the finest sense of justice in the world. They are generous with pity where it is deserved, they are inexorable when it comes to meting out punishment to the wicked."

Nineteen years ago, Clare Tree Major, president, director, playwright and presiding genius of the Children's Theatre, was well on the way to renown as an actress on the American stage. Born and educated in England, grand-niece of the famous Mrs. Charles Keane, she graduated with honors from the London Academy of Dramatic Art and made her debut on the stage. Coming to New York in 1915, she was one of the Washington Square Players at the time when Katharine

ine Cornell was beginning her stage career with that interesting group.

When the World War struck at the American theatre and the Washington Square Players were compelled to disband, Mrs. Major, deeply interested in education for the stage, organized her School of the Theatre, with Walter Hampden and George Arliss as advisers. For four years, Clare Tree Major was the lessee of the Princess Theatre, the only woman theatre manager on Broadway at the time. It was here that she produced, on Saturday mornings, plays for children,

with Broadway actors playing the leading roles, and her students taking minor parts.

Immediately, an eager response came from parents in nearby communities who welcomed entertainment for their children that was free from the clap-trap that characterized the motion picture of that period. Requests came from educators to take the plays into their districts. Then the School of the Theatre was abandoned, and a fully professional company organized to care for the demand.

When the depression began, there were two companies, playing from Cleveland to Washington. While other people worried about the discouraging conditions, Clare Tree Major thought there was but one answer—more children should enjoy the plays. When home life generally was

(Continued on page 17)



Vitalis, the strolling musician, and Remi are shown with Prettyheart, the monkey, and Capi, the dog. Their many adventures on tour in France are told in Clare Tree Major's production, *NOBODY'S BOY*.

Highlights of American Educational Theatre Convention

December 27, 28, 29
HOTEL STEVENS, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

General Notice of Conventions

More than a thousand teachers of Speech and Dramatic Art are expected to attend the combined annual conventions of the *American Educational Theatre Association*, the *American Speech Correction Association* and the *National Association of the Teachers of Speech* at Hotel Stevens in Chicago, December 27, 28 and 29.

For purposes of more direct attack upon the problems in their respective fields the *American Educational Theatre Association* and the *American Speech Correction Association* maintain separate organizations. They are closely affiliated, however, with their "parent" organization, *The National Association of the Teachers of Speech*.

For the combined conventions the program on theatre is being prepared by Professor Lee Norvelle of the University of Indiana, who is the President of the A. E. T. A. The program dealing with speech correction is being planned under the direction of Professor Sara Stinchfield Hawk of the University of Southern California who is the A. S. C. A. President. The remainder of the program is being planned by the N. A. T. S. President, Professor A. Craig Baird, of the State University of Iowa, who is co-ordinating the entire convention program.

The American Educational Theatre Convention was founded in St. Louis in 1936. In the brief interval since that time it has made a phenomenal growth, emerging as a vital professional educational association devoted to the interests of educational theatre in the United States.

Working Committees

An extensive work program is carried on for the American Educational Theatre Association by standing committees. During the annual convention at Hotel Stevens in Chicago special rooms will be provided where the following committees will hold important sessions:

Committee on Membership: Chairman, Professor H. Donald Winbigler, State University of Iowa.

Committee on Teaching Drama in Secondary Schools: Chairman, Dr. Dina Rees Evans, Heights High School, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

Committee on Teaching Drama in University Graduate and Professional Schools: Chairman, Professor Henry Boettcher, Carnegie Institute of Technology.



LEE NORVELLE, *President*

American Educational Theatre Association
and Director of University Theatre,
University of Indiana, Bloomington, Ind.

Letter from Prof. Norvelle

Dear Colleague:

Please accept this as a very personal invitation to become a member of the American Educational Theatre Association.

This organization was founded two years ago by the leaders in the various fields of educational drama for the express purpose of co-ordinating and strengthening the work of teachers on each of the various levels of drama. It is obvious that through the unification of effort and co-operative planning, we can enrich our own background and advance the work in which we are so definitely interested much better than if we worked alone or in small unrelated groups. By joining now, you will have the advantage of becoming acquainted with the plan of procedure and with the objectives of the organization before coming to the Chicago convention in December. The program will be devoted to discussions and demonstrations which I am sure will be interesting and valuable.

A large membership will enable us to make more effective progress in the solution of our particular problems through collective effort in a mutually helpful work-program.

Sincerely yours,

LEE NORVELLE, *President*
American Educational
Theatre Association.

Committee on Playwriting and Experimental Productions: Chairman, Professor George Milton Savage, Jr., University of Washington.

Committee on Theatre Designers and Technicians: Chairman, Professor Arnold Gillette, State University of Iowa.

Committee on Teaching Dramatic Art in Teachers Colleges: Chairman, Professor Robert W. Masters, Indiana State Teachers College.

Committee on Teaching Dramatic Art in Liberal Arts Colleges: Chairman, Professor Arthur C. Cloetingh, Pennsylvania State College.

Committee on Drama Contests and Drama Loan Service: Chairman, Ernest Bavely, editor of *THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN*.

The secondary school committee has been particularly active. Seven sub-committees have been engaged in vital projects dealing with problems of curriculum, new plays for the high school theatre, the revision of old plays for the high school stage, an A. E. T. A. play list, motion picture appreciation, radio drama appreciation and publications.

At the convention a luncheon has been scheduled for each standing committee. Most of the committees will take advantage of the provisions which have been made to advance their work.

Sectional Meetings

For the American Educational Theatre Association convention this year President Norvelle has succeeded in building a program which is at once comprehensive and highly selective. He has chosen topics and speakers with great care, and has eliminated many of the conflicts which often occur in convention schedules. The final "streamlined" program includes 13 sectional meetings covering the following areas:

Teaching of Dramatic Art on the Elementary School Level.

Teaching of Dramatic Art on the Secondary School Level.

Teaching of Dramatic Art on the Graduate School Level.

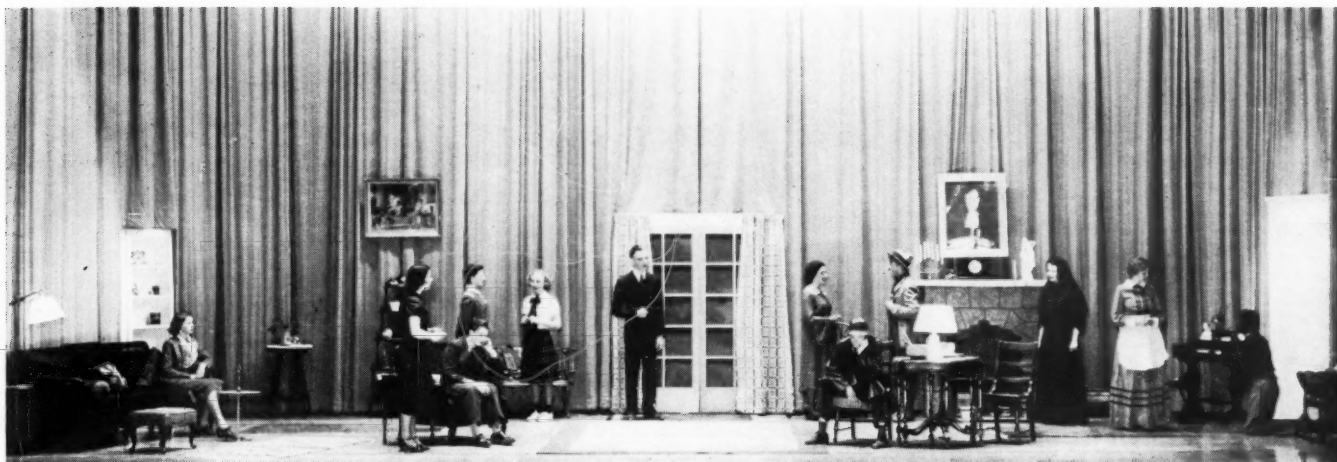
Playwriting and Experimental Productions.

Theatre Designers and Technicians.

Directing and Acting.

Motion Picture Appreciation.

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN



Scene from the Junior Class play, *PHANTOM TIGER*, staged at Robbinsdale, Minnesota, High School. Directed by Miss Bess Sinnot. (Thespian Troupe No. 352.)

Radio Drama. Children's Theatre.

These sectional meetings are so scheduled that not more than two occur at any one time. When two are scheduled for the same hour they represent divergent interests, as nearly as possible.

Demonstrations:

At previous American Educational Theatre Association conventions demonstrations have proved very popular. This year the program includes a number of demonstrations which are expected to be well attended.

Mildred Harter Wirt of the Gary public schools will present a demonstration in elementary school dramatics with children from a public school of Gary, Indiana.

A demonstration in acting and directing will be presented by students from DePaul University and the Goodman Memorial Theatre under the direction of Professor David B. Itkin.

In radio a demonstration will be presented by the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Demonstrations in stage lighting, including acting area-lighting, light control, and home-built equipment will be presented by Professor Hunton D. Sellman of the State University of Iowa, Professor Theodore Fuchs, Northwestern University and Professor McDonald W. Held of Tarkio College.

At the Goodman theatre Mrs. Charlotte Chorpennig will present a rehearsal demonstration of the play *Cinderella*.

Professional Theatre Attractions

At least three professional theatre productions will be available to those who attend the annual convention of the American Educational Theatre Association in Chicago December 27, 28 and 29.

John Barrymore who has made a phenomenal success in *My Dear Children*

NATIONAL THESPIAN LUNCHEON

Members of the National Thespian Society who will attend the National Speech and Drama Conventions in Chicago in December will have the opportunity to meet the national officers, regional directors, and special guests of the society at a luncheon scheduled for 12:30 noon, December 29. Full particulars regarding this luncheon will be announced in the December circular. Additional information may be obtained at the National Thespian Desk at the convention.

will be continuing his long run at the Selwyn Theatre. This attraction has been the favorite of out-of-town visitors in Chicago. The new success by Moss Hart and George F. Kaufman, built around the personality of Alexander Wolcott and entitled *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, will be showing at the Harris Theatre. This play, which only recently opened in

New York, will undoubtedly be popular with high school and college theatres when it is released for amateur production. At the Erlanger Theatre, Edward Everett Horton of stage and screen fame will be playing in Ben Levy's delightful comedy, *Springtime for Henry*.

The Secretary-Treasurer of A.E.T.A. will maintain a ticket service without brokerage fee for all convention guests. Those who wish to secure advanced reservations are invited to write directly to H. Donald Winbiger, Box 81, Iowa City, Iowa.

All orders for tickets should be accompanied by check or money order. The scale of prices for all productions will be \$1.10, \$1.65, \$2.20, and \$2.75. Tickets reserved in advance will be held at the convention headquarters at Hotel Stevens until they are called for.

Theatre Party, After-Theatre Party and Banquet

As a part of its convention program the American Educational Theatre Association is planning a theatre party at the Erlanger Theatre on Wednesday evening, December 27. The attraction will be Ben Levy's delightful comedy, *Springtime for Henry*, starring Edward Everett Horton of Broadway, Hollywood and points between. A large proportion of the members of the Association expect to attend.

Following the performance all A.E.T.A., A.S.C.A., and N.A.T.S. members are invited to an after-theatre party at Hotel Stevens. Entertainment for this party will be provided by Zeta Phi Eta, National Professional Speech Arts Fraternity for Women which is sponsoring the affair.

The annual A.E.T.A. banquet will occur the following evening, Thursday, December 28. Edward Everett Horton and several other personalities of the professional theatre are scheduled to appear at this banquet.

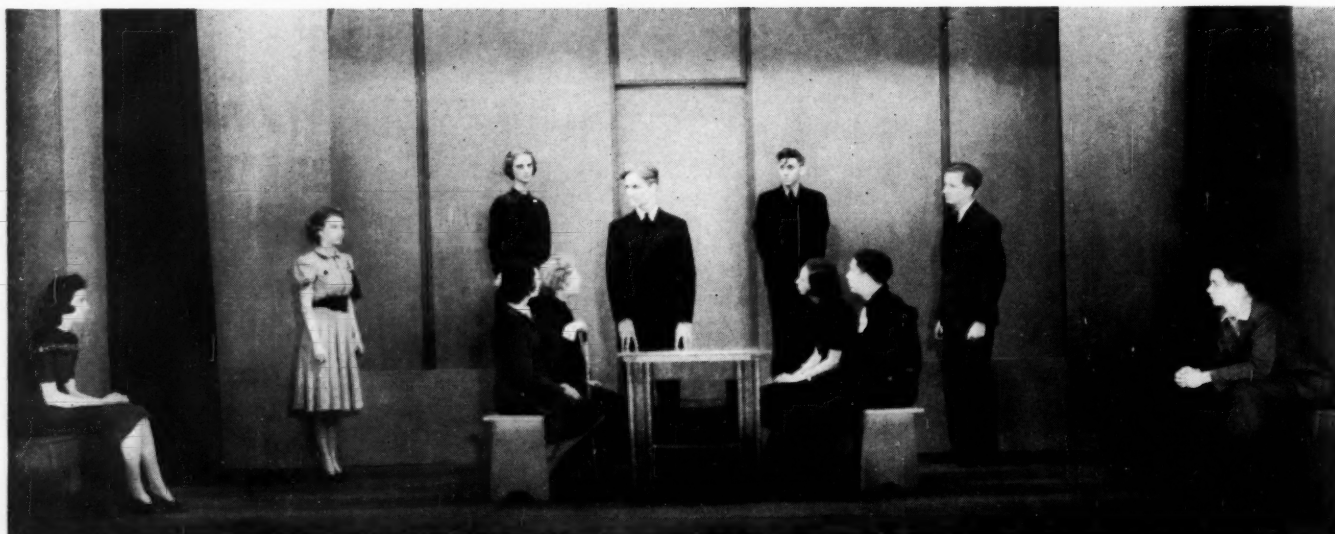
NATIONAL DRAMA WEEK

February 4th through 11th

Mrs. Samuel Newton, of the Drama League of New York announces that National Drama Week this year will be observed February 4th through 11th. Mrs. James D. Dunlop, New York City, is general chairman of this year's celebration. Assisting Mrs. Dunlop are Ernest Bavely, Cincinnati, Ohio, who will act as chairman for drama groups in high schools, and Carl Glick, Columbia, S. C., who will act as chairman for community theatres and college groups.

All drama clubs, Little Theatres, college and university theatres, high school dramatics clubs, radio stations, and individuals interested in the theatre, are urged to observe this national event in some appropriate manner.

High school groups throughout the country are urged to write to The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, for a list of suggestions for observing National Drama Week. The list will be furnished free of charge upon request.



Scene from the play, *WINGS OF THE MORNING*, as staged by Mr. O. E. Sams, Jr., at Knoxville, Tennessee, High School.
(Thespian Troupe No. 283.)

Democracy Through Dramatics

by MARION F. F. BOOTS

Director of Dramatics, Pipkin Junior High School, Springfield, Missouri

DOWN through the ages, from the Greek theatre to our modern picture theatres, the stage has fascinated all civilized people, and the theatre has been one of the most important gathering places for people where they could share equally in satisfying that universal hunger for entering into a land of "make-believe".

Because this urge is at its greatest height in youth, it is logical that our schools should provide for the needy by making every effort possible to bring the desirable in the theatre to our girls and boys. And since the stage of the modern school does not differ greatly from the stage of the theatre, it is possible for us to provide children with the maximum of desirable dramatic activities. As children participate in the activities of dramatics they are able to feel the same thrill that comes to actor and audience alike in the professional theatre. Students are able to experience the delights of both actor and spectator, thus promoting a democratic attitude from both viewpoints and at the same time better individuals and finer citizens are being developed.

There are three distinct phases to the study of the drama. First is the study of the drama as one of the chief divisions of literature. Second is the acting, producing and writing of dramas. Third is the developing of individuality and character and good citizenship.

Every man, woman and child in a democracy should be able to speak his native language correctly and well. It is the patriotic duty and privilege of all teachers of Speech and Dramatics in our nation to see to it that every child learns to speak the English language as perfectly as it is possible for him to do so. They should

also make their influence in this work felt by other teachers of other subjects and by the citizens of their community. Speech and Dramatic teachers should be proud of this opportunity to serve their country and to improve democratic living in this manner.

The stage and the school form several important foundation stones for better democratic living—an appreciation and understanding for all people. The school is providing a more intelligent theatre-going public because of this understanding, and the theatre is providing better forms of entertainment to satisfy the public.

Because of its very special appeal to young people, dramatics offers a definite opportunity for personal development and improvement of the individual; and when boys and girls have accomplished this they are prepared to live better lives in a democracy, whether it is the democracy of the school or of the country in which they live. Through the study of dramatics our boys and girls lose their self-consciousness and "inferiority complexes." They learn to mingle with one another and share responsibility; they take their place as earnest and sincere leaders and followers. Life seems good to them and they are useful, alert citizens. It is not possible always to play or study noble characters, but by becoming acquainted with those who are undesirable ones, any normal boy or girl receives a challenge to exercise his right of thinking, self-expression and discrimination. Interpreting a part or reading a play demands careful character analysis; thus our children learn to observe the people they meet in life and literature more closely and will develop a sympathy for

human beings because of a clearer understanding of their motives and problems. These are necessary qualities to possess for a fuller democratic life. Love of self and having one's own way is replaced by tolerance and an attitude of fair play.

Because of the great activity in dramatic work, one finds that an unusual amount of patience, sportsmanship, tact, and good nature is essential; these qualities are certainly essential to democratic living.

Some children prefer to participate in the "behind the scenes" activity rather than become actors. These children should be given every opportunity to exercise their talent in this direction. We have found many a "stage hand" or "electrician" who would, in the case of emergency, accept a role of an actor who had become suddenly ill. Often these children find they know the "lines" as well as the actors themselves, for they have attended rehearsals and listened to every one. We should try to give the actors and stage crew such a feeling of responsibility that neither the director or any other adult sponsor need be present in the wings during a performance. Here, then, children find themselves in responsible positions and must exercise a spirit of democratic citizenship or take unhappy consequences, which they cannot afford to do.

Philip Barry in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* makes his leading character say, "Emotion is the only real thing in our lives; it is the person, it is the soul." Indeed, the very essence of democracy is a deep emotional feeling and when emotion lies dormant in a child we find a stupid child, lacking in ambition, self-assurance, and friends. Find him and give him an opportunity to participate in a drama group and you will have an alert good citizen.



With the Radio Editor

This page is published for teachers and students interested in radio activities at the high school level. Readers' comments and suggestions are welcomed.

Edited by G. HARRY WRIGHT

Drama Department, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio



"**W**HERE'S page 2 of this script?"
"How do I know? How many pages are we supposed to have? Mine aren't numbered."

"Hey, gimme another script. This one is so dim and blurred I can't read it."

"Hey director, doesn't the sound effects man get a script? And what kinda sound do you need on this show, anyhow?"

Bedlam, you say? No, just my radio workshop group, under a student director, trying to cast its first play of the season. Of course, the first effort of the season is always difficult, and when the faculty director sits down and refuses to work or advise, that doesn't help matters much. But it does bring out some interesting problems—and suggests how to solve them.

The first trouble my inexperienced director encountered was, as indicated above, with the scripts. In the first place, there were not enough of them for each actor to have one. Then too there were pages missing in some of the scripts. Others were blurred and indistinct. As the audition went on it was found that the scripts did not all agree with one another. Some had been corrected and revised, others not.

It soon became obvious that the director had not made up his mind as to what parts of the play he would use for tryout. So he spent a great deal of time leafing through looking for good scenes and then lost more time while his actors looked up the scene. There was trouble too in getting the actors before the microphone promptly. Usually several minutes were lost before an actor who was called upon to try out would finally make up his mind to get before the microphone and start speaking.

There seemed to be no idea in the mind of the director as to the order in which he should try out the various parts. Consequently, he kept shifting from one to another not really deciding anything definite after hearing a contestant read a part.

Finally the hour ended and the play had not been cast. Another half hour was given and at the end of that time a very confused director, afraid of a rebuke if he did not get some kind of a cast, gave me his list and I called a rehearsal. At the rehearsal some interesting facts developed. I found that the leading man, while acceptable for his part as long as he alone was considered, sounded entirely out of place in relation to some of the voices which had to play opposite to him. I found that the leading lady could not come to the rehearsals and would be out of town on the date on which the play

GREAT PLAYS

The attention of all Thespians is called to the series of Great Plays being broadcast each Sunday at 2 P. M., over the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company. These plays are examples of the best drama that the theatre has afforded from the time of the ancient Greeks to the present day. They are strongly recommended by this page.

The series began on Sunday, October 15, and will continue through Sunday, May 5, 1940. A booklet, entitled *Drama Guide to Great Plays*, is available for enjoying and understanding the Great Plays Series. To obtain it write to Columbia University Press, New York, and enclose twenty-five cents.

was to be broadcast. One of the important characters, while he was possessed of a good voice, was totally unable to take direction. He was all right in the lighter scenes of the show but fell down badly in the important scenes which called for a heavy, emotional response. Finally, I found that the entire cast was unbalanced and lacking in the unity that makes for a good production. All of the members were fairly good as individuals but when their voices came out of the loud speaker together they did not make a well-proportioned play group.

The result was that the entire play had to be recast. But a pleasanter and more important result was that the students learned something about casting. After a bit of discussion, it was not difficult for

COLUMBIA WORKSHOP PLAYS

If you are weary of the dramatic fare heard daily on your local station and would like to get a glimpse of what fine radio drama can be like, by all means read *Columbia Workshop Plays*, a collection of fourteen plays presented during the past three years by the Columbia Workshop, selected and edited by Douglas Coulter.

This is, I believe, the best collection of radio dramas in book form that can be found anywhere. Each play is strikingly individual making its own contribution to the development of new techniques in radio writing and production. More than this, these dramas are thrilling reading and are on important contemporary themes. Once you pick the book up it is not likely that you will lay it down until you have finished the last play.

There is only one objection that can be offered to the selection. Of the fourteen plays only three could be called comic. The others are tragic in tone, and in subject matter, and lead to tragic conclusions. One has the feeling as they are being read either that this world is a dreadfully unpleasant place or that radio cannot project life in its gayer aspects. But this does not keep each play from being at least a minor masterpiece in its field. Read them all. You'll learn more from them about radio drama than anyone can tell you in a textbook.

(Published by Whittlesey House, New York City)

them to arrive at the following principles which should always be followed in casting a radio play.

Script

First with regard to the script. The first page of the script should contain at least the following information: The name of the play (or if it is a serial, the name of the series and the number of the episode). Second, the author. Third, the music needed. Fourth, the sound effects needed. Fifth, the date and time to be broadcast. Sixth, the characters in the play. Seventh, such other information as may be applicable to that particular program.

There should be plenty of scripts—one for each actor, one for the director, one for the engineer, one for the sound effects man, one for the announcer, and at least two in reserve in case of loss or of special production difficulties. All scripts should be clear, distinct (not too many carbons). All sheets should be numbered all the way across the top. They should be double or triple-spaced with a wide enough margin for production notes and all scripts should positively agree. It is inexcusable to make a correction on one script and not make it on all others. As a matter of fact, if many corrections are made the scripts should be re-typed.

Casting the Radio Play

Before the audition or tryout the director should select the most effective scenes for the portrayal of each part, marking these scenes on each script so that the actors can find them easily, and stick to these scenes during the audition. Then too it is well where the cast is small as it usually is in a radio play to concentrate on one character until you find a suitable actor rather than to jump from one character to another and confuse the mind with a multitude of mixed impressions. This does not mean, however, that a decision thus made is final. A change may be necessitated by a tryout for another character in the same play. In other words, the director should check each voice against the other voices that are going to play in the scene with him.

It is important that an actor be responsive to direction. Consequently, if a voice sounds satisfactory the director should give some directions and try some other scenes to determine whether the actor has skill or wide enough scope to play the part in its various moods and to follow the suggestions of the director.

Before a student is cast the director should check for his availability. That is, the director should know whether that person will be able to attend rehearsals and appear in the actual broadcast. This information gained early will avoid disappointment later. When the cast is complete, it should be stated only tentatively and then immediately run through a reading rehearsal before final announcement. This will check for general balance and proper relationship of voices to one another in the play.

Staging the High School Play

This department is designed to assist teachers in choosing, casting, and producing plays at the high school level. Suggestions as to plays which should be discussed next or how this department can be of greater assistance to teachers will be welcomed.

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Thespian National Director and Director of Dramatics at Berea College, Berea, Ky.

STAGING A FAVORITE NOVEL Myrtle Reed's *Lavender and Old Lace*

MANY novels are being put into dramatic form, favorites that audiences will like to see acted. One of them is *Lavender and Old Lace*. Its title creates the atmosphere you want to have in this play. Then, too, it gives the women the edge in numbers as there are six women and four men in the cast. Samuel French publishes it. It carries a twenty-five dollar royalty.

The action takes place in the old-fashioned sitting room of Mary Ainslie in a New England village. There are three acts and five scenes. The time is the present and the season is from April through August. There is but one setting.

It has the charm of a green and white New England village. The diction may prove a problem, if one is to really do the play in Eastern standard speech and the dialect attendant to it.

Here is the plot in brief: Mary Ainslie has become an institution in her village. She lives alone, growing lavender to place among her old laces. She never is away from home and is noted for the lamp seen burning in her attic window from dusk to dawn. Miss Ainslie's closest neighbor is going to Europe and leaves her niece in the care of Miss Ainslie. A young newspaper man comes to the village and falls in love with Ruth, the niece. An accident occurs which causes the young man to lose his eyesight. Miss Ainslie and Ruth work to restore the young man's eyesight, because Miss Ainslie has

come to think of Carl, the newspaper man, as her son. A surprise ending revealing the mystery of the lamp helps to add zest to this quaint play.

This domestic comedy is altogether different in tempo than the farces presented in the October and November issues. No play should drag, but this play is acted more in waltz time than six-eighths time. It moves briskly but in a more contented mood.

Miss Ainslie is a gracious lady with soft, silvery white hair. The silver hair can be achieved by silver powder. She is small and almost dainty. She should be the essence of charming simplicity. I see her in soft chiffon in grey or lavender.

Jane Hathaway, Miss Ainslie's neighbor, is very tall and angular. She is domineering. I see her in ultra conservative costumes, no doubt black in color and with her hair pulled back in very straight lines.

Ruth Thorne, the leading lady, is about twenty-two. She is in very becoming spring and summer costumes. If she is a blonde, she can wear shades of green very well or can be dressed in a blue ensemble. Her clothes are very smart. Her purse, hat and shoes, could be in a contrast color; in fact, they should be, since today it is considered good taste to wear four colors. She should be completely unaffected but should not be colorless in personality.

Bernice Carlton, Ruth's friend, is a little younger than Ruth. If Ruth is blonde, Bernice can be brunette for contrast. She should wear a tailored summer traveling costume to contrast with Ruth's

summer frock, which she wears well in Act II. These colors should harmonize but be contrasted. If Ruth wears a green combination in Act I, it will be wise to put Bernice in blue or pink in this act as both are good colors for this type of play and character. If Ruth is in a pink dress of soft material, Bernice can be wearing something in a deep blue. The persons chosen for the parts will somewhat determine the color each girl wears.

Hepsey, the maid, is a comedy character. She is stocky and slow in movement. She wears her hair parted in the middle and in two long braids down her back. She wears a gingham dress, white or colored apron, colored ribbons on her hair. She is in her twenties also.

Sophrony Trotter is in her late thirties, very thin and over particular. Her hair is straight, parted severely in the middle, and knotted in the back. She could wear dark grey or black clothes, grey, if Jane wears black.

Doctor Howard Patterson is a tall man of fifty and very dignified. He is very erect. His hair should be silvered and he wears a well-kept mustache (consult a make-up book on the subject of mustaches). I see him in a light grey suit. He can wear the same throughout.

James Ball is a man in his fifties, completely under the domination of Jane Hathaway. He is a small, wizened-up type. If a good wig is available, his head should be bald except for a fringe of hair. He should wear gold-rimmed glasses and his face should be sallow and wrinkled. He should be dressed in a suit which seems too small and which should accentuate his slightness. It could be a dark grey or a blue serge. A black suit would do. He symbolizes the hen-pecked man.

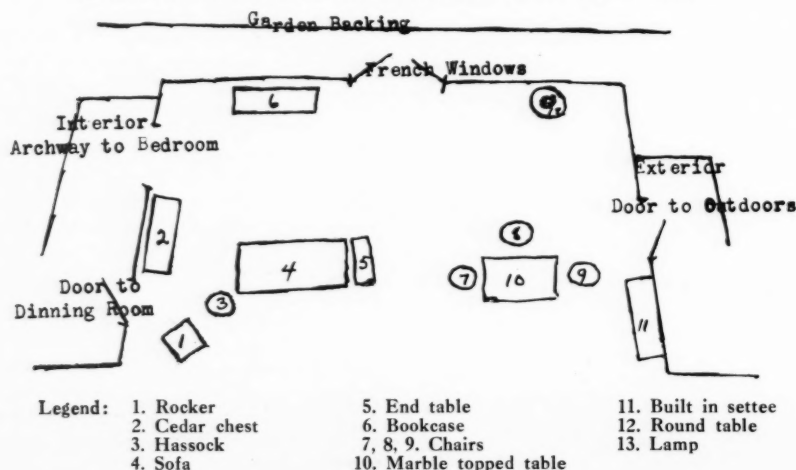
Carl Winfield, the lead, is a typical young man, about twenty-five, very pleasant, taller than Ruth, and good-looking. He would wear a typical summer suit—light tan with tan and white shoes, or he could wear a darker coat with light trousers. Carl would have more than one costume. He could change coats and ties.

Joe Pendleton is the young male comedy character, the chap in love with Hepsey, the maid, but too bashful to admit it. He should gangle. His very lankiness should make him awkward. He should have uncombed hair. If possible, it should be red. He is a typical "country bumpkin." The script says he wears a colored work shirt, no necktie, blue overalls and heavy work shoes.

The setting should be very simple and neat in appearance. It is home-like. The furniture is the old-fashioned type, perhaps colonial in style, in either maple or walnut or a combination of both, dependent upon which is most obtainable. Marble-topped tables, spinet desk, ladder back or Windsor type of chairs, a secretary, a what-not with bric-a-brac. Colonial furniture has no completely definite style. It may include Duncan Phyfe, for instance, as well as furniture made in

(Continued on next page, second column)

Acts I, II and III of *LAVENDER AND OLD LACE*



Five Obligations of the High School Director

(Continued from page 9)

respect for, if not a genuine love of, the Theatre Universal.

But another avenue through which we might accomplish that obligation to the theatre is to manipulate some method whereby the students might themselves see a good professional production. It is true that "he who has never seen anything but a cigar-store Indian finds in that his highest form of art."

More than 90 per cent of our high school students have never seen a legitimate theatrical production. It is, then, our duty to find some means, if it can be done, to make it possible for them to see a good drama on the stage. This may take time and effort, a great deal of extra work and added responsibility and sometimes some financial aid from us, but the result is worth every bit of it.

For seven years I drilled into my students the advisability of missing a movie now and then and saving their money so that they might drive 150 miles with me to see at least one good road show. And in that time over 200 different students sat enthralled before such players as Cornell, Evans, Le Gallienne, Hayes, Cohan, Houston, and many others, the majority of them for the first time. And breathlessly these students have come to me, exclaiming that they didn't know such a difference could exist as between the movies and what they had just seen. Not only had they set a new standard in their dramatic life, but I could always detect a renewed interest and endeavor on their part when they once more returned to their own rehearsal.

This single experience of sharing a dramatic production with a group of students has given me some of the happiest moments I can remember in my teaching experience and, believe me, it has been no small part of their educational program.

In justice to the theatre, as well as students and audience and school, we must select plays that possess a literary or artistic merit rather than with an eye on the box office so that the juniors may give the seniors a banquet.

And finally we come to our last obligation. What is my duty to myself?

But this obligation has been fulfilled every time we met an obligation to any of the other sources. If we have discharged these duties and have done them well, we'll go to bed with an easy conscience and we'll be tired enough to sleep. Then, too, our work will speak loudly enough for itself that e'er long we can bring about the realization on the part of the boards of education everywhere that "putting on a play" calls for every bit as much study and specialization on the part of the teacher as does the business of directing the band or coaching the football team.

We will, likewise, have fulfilled our obligations to the student, to our audience, to the school and to the theatre and when



Cast for *SEVEN SISTERS* at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, High School. Directed by Miss Doris E. Marsolais. (Troupe No. 190.)

we have done this, we who love every blessed thing connected with the theatre and we who appreciate so keenly the theatre as an educational medium, will surely have fulfilled our obligation to ourselves.

Lavender and Old Lace

America. A good little book to have is *The Seng Book*, published by the Seng Company, 1450 Dayton Street, Chicago. It has all types of pictures of period furniture. Or there are many books on furniture. This offers an opportunity for a project in stagecraft in this line.

Curtains can be long and of dotted Swiss material. A cheap material could be mosquito netting dyed some color, dependent upon the effect you wanted—the effect should be summery. Theatrical gauze is very inexpensive and effective. One can get really cheap lace curtains. The chairs and settee would have doilies on them as would the table. It would be

achieved by the use of a long stencil such as shown on this page.

This stencil has the figures and side stripes cut out. When the walls are painted a deep tan, let us say, and after they are dry, the scene painter takes his stencil card and goes over the stencil with a green or brown paint and keeps repeating the stencil evenly on the flats, making a striped wallpaper effect. Professor Herbert Hake in the October *Lagniappe* (published by Row, Peterson & Co.) has a good solution for stenciling wallpaper. He suggests using an oiled paper. If green is used in the wallpaper, the curtains could be green also; if brown, the curtains could still be green.

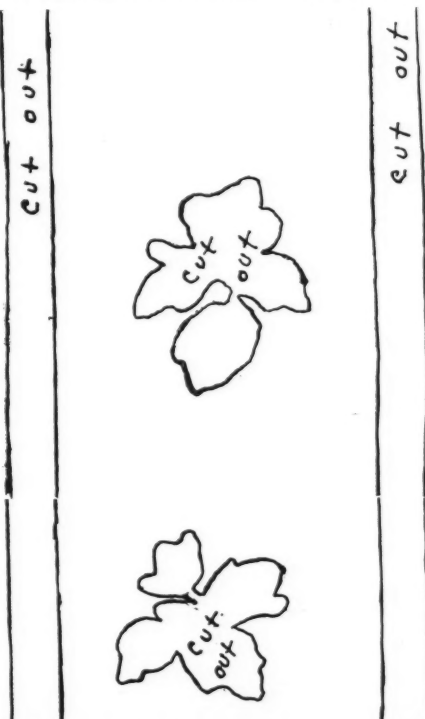
Clara Tree Major

(Continued from page 11)

tense with disaster and children found the security of parenthood tottering, that was the time, Mrs. Major felt, when children needed most the emotional absorption and release of good plays, the serenity of beautiful scenery and costumes, and an interlude in the stress and bickering of everyday life. To the chagrin of other producers this unusual woman expanded her organization to include a third producing company. Personal sacrifice and courage were required to assure an increased financial burden at such a time. With the simplicity that belongs to the great, she saw only one objective—good theatre for emotionally harassed children. To those who cried, "It can't be done," she calmly replied, "I know, but it must be done."

Some years later in an interview with Bosley Crowther, Clara Tree Major said in conclusion, "Ours is hard work and there's no profit in it so far as money is concerned, but the pleasure of seeing children made happy, of seeing their faces light with joy and hearing the music of their laughter—well, it gives one a thousand times more thrill than anything in the adult theatre."

In appearance Clara Tree Major is not the conventional actress or director. She lives in the Westchester hills with her husband and daughter who is also an accomplished actress. When the charming Mrs. Major is not directing the Children's Theatre, she spends her small leisure time in building gardens and planning the decorations of her home.



effective to have a wallpaper design on the wall, of a simple stripe which can be

Motion Picture Appreciation

Edited by HAROLD TURNER

Chairman, Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College and author of FILM GUIDES to *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*, *The Blue Bird*, *The Great Victor Herbert*, *Swanee River*, and others.

FANTASY IN LITERATURE

By Richard G. Lillard, Instructor in English,
Los Angeles City College.

LITERARY fantasy appeals to man's lasting interest in the marvelous and supernatural. Primitive men all the way from ancient Egyptians to the present-day Navajos have wondered at the natural world about them, at forces and events that they cannot explain, and have devised explanations and means for control—myths and magic—which are fantastic because they lack connection with actual fact as established by modern science. Children, knowing little more of reality than savages, are excited by stories of incredible lands of make-believe. And even the most highly educated adults can enjoy the relaxation of being childlike and unscientific, of surmounting in their imaginations the relentless laws of physics, biology and chemistry.

Proof of this is the popularity, past and present, of a million oral tales of dreams, miracles, visions, ghosts, charms, and devils, and of a great body of written literature. There are the Greek and Roman myths, with dragon's teeth that sprout into horse, half man. In Norse mythology a god hurls lightning bolts at men and the moulting of a huge white eagle produces snowstorms. There is much ancient mythology in the Old Testament, and there are volumes of wonder stories told by the Irish and the American Indians. In the *Arabian Nights* are flying horses and magic carpets. There are astonishing happenings all through the great epics. Equally amazing things occur in the stories of King Arthur and in the fairy tales of Europe, well represented by the Grimm brothers' collection, which fill the world with witches, goblins, and dragons. In America there are native products, the yarns told by the liars' clubs and the tall stories produced in frontier areas about supermen like Paul Bunyan.

Creative writers have delighted in the invention of fantastic lands, consistent in their own terms, peopled by characters who seem to belong there. Examples are Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Shakespeare put impossible beings into two of his well-known plays, *Tempest* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Barrie did similarly in *Peter Pan*. Many masterpieces of poetry are fantastic, none being more widely read than *The Ancient Mariner*.

Idealists who dream of a civilization without any social or political problems have put their dreams on paper. The result is a long series of fantastically per-

fect worlds in books such as Plato's *Republic*, Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, and Hilton's *Lost Horizon*.

The most popular fantasy nowadays is pseudo-scientific romance, exciting and entertaining adventure related by writers with a little knowledge plus a bizarre imagination. Jules Verne was a pioneer in this field and his accounts of trips to the moon, combination airplanes and submarines, and a project to tip the earth's axis so as to melt the polar ice cap and make coal beds available. H. G. Wells was popularly successful with his *Time Machine* and *War of the Worlds*, and has recently invaded the future in *The Shape of Things to Come*. A multitude of pulp novels and magazines, "comic" strips, and articles in Sunday supplements detail incredible stories of death rays, submarine civilizations, Martian invaders, superhuman aviators, and rocket ships.

In modern psychology the psychoanalytic approach of Freud has shown how large a place fantasy plays in our lives. Our repressions, inhibitions, and inferiorities lead us to wishful thinking and compensation, either in our conscious thinking or in our unconscious dreaming. Such fantasy may make us approximately happy by enabling us to adjust ourselves to undesired circumstances, but it may so dominate us that we forget what reality is and become mentally unbalanced. Twentieth-century writers who have depicted the place of subjective fantasies in our lives are Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Somerset Maugham, Thomas Wolfe and Eugene O'Neill.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What violations of scientific laws were there in the events of the last motion-picture cartoon you saw?

CASTING CREDITS:

Mytyl.....	Shirley Temple
Tytl.....	Johnny Russell
Mummy Tyl.....	Spring Byington
Daddy Tyl.....	Russell Hicks
Tylette.....	Gale Sondergaard
Tylo.....	Eddie Collins
Mrs. Berlingot.....	Leona Roberts
Angela Berlingot.....	Sybil Jason
Fairy Berylune.....	Jessie Ralph
Light.....	Helen Ericson
Granny Tyl.....	Cecilia Loftus
Grandpa Tyl.....	Al Shean
Mr. Luxury.....	Nigel Bruce
Mrs. Luxury.....	Laura Hope Crews
Nurse.....	Claire Du Brey
Caller of Roll.....	Frank Dawson
Father Time.....	Thurston Hall

PRODUCING CREDITS:

Directed by Walter Lang
Screenplay by Ernest Pascal
Photography by Arthur Miller, A. S. C.
Released by Twentieth Century-Fox Pictures

2. What is fantastic about all utopias?
3. Why do many people enjoy tall stories?
4. In what story you have read does a character make up for personal deficiencies by leading a different life in an habitual dream fantasy?
5. Does reading fantastic science or horror stories hurt a person's mind or character?
6. What ideas underlie the fantasy in "Gulliver's Travels" or "Æsop's Fables?"
7. Compare the effectiveness of the fantasy in the book and film versions of "The Wizard of Oz" or "The Blue Bird."
8. What are the literary equivalents in our civilization to the witches, wizards, gods, and giants of primitive literatures?

COMPARISON OF VERSIONS

By Walter Prill, Instructor of Drama,
Herbert Hoover High School,
Glendale, California.

Fundamentally there is little difference between *The Blue Bird* as produced by Twentieth Century-Fox and Maeterlinck's play of the same name. The screen writers have done that which is most important—they have captured the spirit, the wisdom, the philosophy of the "blue bird."

Many playwrights may be accused of verbosity; it is one of the tools of writing that makes weak characters and a "spineless" plot, a play. Maeterlinck may not be charged with being verbose. Every act of *The Blue Bird* is packed with the essential words that the dramatist felt would express this fantastic adventure into the world of "The Past," "The Present," and "The Future." In fact, he felt the need for more "act time" in which to express his feelings about his theme, so in 1910 there was added to the already successful play, another act, making six instead of five.

The screen-playwright, realizing that the play in its original form had to be cut, constructed a scenario that is the equivalent of three acts with a prologue and an epilogue. The former, or opening sequence in the screen version, establishes for the audience the fact that this fantasy is the dream of Mytyl and Tytyl, and that Mytyl, Shirley Temple, is a selfish, disagreeable child. In the play form, Maeterlinck's Mytyl is not selfish and disagreeable, but less bold and forward than Tytyl, who always takes the initiative and leads, something he does not do in the screen story. A timely bit injected by the screen writers into this same sequence is the call to war which comes to the children's father the evening before their dream.

In the adventure into "The Past" the screen play has Mytyl and Tytyl accompanied by Tylo, the dog, Tylette, the cat, and Light, who goes with them everywhere but frequently conveniently absents herself. In Maeterlinck's play the children are attended by other characters who play important roles. The screen play is not weakened by this change but is, on the contrary, strengthened because of the added importance that is given to Tylo and Tylette. These two animals in human form are the forces of Good and Evil, respectively. The cat is treacherous

and wants to mislead the children, but Tylo is faithful and protects them in their search for the "blue bird."

The "Night" scene in the stage play is an impressive, thought-provoking episode. The studio did not include it in the screen play, and probably, its inclusion would not have been wise. The characters in this episode are extremely difficult to bring to life. The younger members of an audience might be frightened unnecessarily at characters they cannot comprehend. Maeterlinck makes little attempt to portray them in the play; they simply make an appearance costumed as weird, grotesque, supernatural forces.

The adventure into the "Land of the Present," where Mr. and Mrs. Luxury dwell, is delightful. This scene always will be one of the greatest pleasures to young and old, for it allows the imagination to run riot in an abundance of splendor, wealth, and magnificence. The scenario enlarges upon the play and in so doing shows the effectiveness of motion picture technical possibilities over the legitimate theatre.

A masterful addition to the stage play has been made by the screen writers. As Mytyl and Tytyl journey into the "Land of the Future," it develops that these plainly garbed, barefooted children they see are the unborn children of tomorrow. Several of the youngsters may be recognized, especially one, a homely, awkward boy who says something about making people free. When the motion picture producers announced their intention of filming *The Blue Bird*, they received a number of letters from lovers of Maeterlinck's play, suggesting the use of this dramatic bit in the "Land of the Future" sequence.

The closing scenes of the film take us back to the home of the children as they awaken from their dream. And in this last scene, play and screen versions differ little. The elusive bird they sought is discovered in their own home! It is given, in the film, by a very changed Mytyl to a sick child who becomes well when she receives this unexpected gift. The children's father is informed by a jubilant messenger that war has been averted; a truce signed on the very eve of the army's departure. In the stage play Tytyl gives the "blue bird" to the neighbor's sick child, but it escapes as they handle it. Tytyl assures the little girl he can capture it again, and turns to the audience with the plea that if any of them should find it, would they be so kind as to give the bird back?

MAETERLINCK—THE WRITER

Belgian by birth, French by adoption, and international by embrace, Maurice Maeterlinck maintains a respected place in the field of literature. His main purpose in writing seems to be to "... suggest at least meanings beyond the reach of words." Symbolism, fantasy, spiritualism, and mystery, attained through the poetic



Scene from the motion picture production of Maeterlinck's *THE BLUE BIRD*.
(Courtesy Twentieth Century-Fox Pictures.)

style of expression, dominate his writings and set forth his philosophies. Just how permanent a place among the literary immortals Maeterlinck will capture, remains as a decision for the future generations, but during his life he has known extraordinary acclaim. While a very young man, he was hailed as "The Belgian Shakespeare," a title which he himself did not accept because of his fine knowledge of, and high regard for, the English Shakespeare. Since the death of Tolstoy, however, he has held the literary focal point of interest in contemporary Europe, although in recent years his writings have been few in number.

In appearance, Maeterlinck is broad and stout, about five feet nine in height, with a heavy jowl, eyes which change expression often, and an easy unaffected manner.

Evidently his Flemish parents were of the practical type in desiring for their son a security of livelihood. At their wishes he studied and later practiced law for a brief period in his home city, Ghent. But in 1886, at the age of twenty-four, he went to Paris where he met a circle of writers in whose influence he became absorbed. At this time he was won over completely to his ultimate style of writing.

Three years later, the death of his father called him back to his native land where he published his first volume of poems. Then his play, *Princess Maleine*,

commanded attention of the eminent European literary critics. When he returned to Paris some years later, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to his life work.

Plays, essays, and poems are all credited to Maeterlinck. He has adopted the French language as his own, and definitely represents the French in literature. His early writings show the influence of his French wife, Georgette Leblanc, an actress of note. He was also a disciple of Poe and Emerson, and attempted to emulate them in his expression of moods and half-realized feelings.

Probably Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird* is the most universally known of all his writings. Perhaps this is because the story is for and about children, therefore appealing to all ages. Its sequel, *The Betrothal*, never achieved an equal success, because its theme had less appeal. Tytyl, older, seeks his ideal mate in the land of imagination. He is led by six children who are to claim him as father at a later period. Ancestors, both good and bad, aid in the guidance. Eventually he awakens to find himself at home, and his sweetheart the girl to whom he had given the "blue bird."

Home, The Intruder, The Seven Princesses, and *The Blind*, are one act plays which illustrate the fine feeling of restraint in Maeterlinck's works. *Pelleas and Melisande*, a long play with the same sort of whimsy as in *The Blue Bird*, should intrigue all lovers of fantasy.

Occasionally Maeterlinck departed from his preferred style of writing and became more realistic. Two long plays, *Monna Vanna* and *Mary Magdalene* have real people as characters whose motives are reasoned and whose speeches are rhetorical. Although these plays caught and held popular attention, without doubt deserving a niche in dramatic literature, Maeterlinck's greatest contribution is his revelation of the supernatural.

Maurice Maeterlinck, one of the greatest of living writers, will personally introduce *The Blue Bird* to the screen. Like his famed contemporary, George Bernard Shaw, who acted in the film trailer for the first screen version of one of his plays, *Pygmalion*, Maeterlinck, from his home on the Continent, will introduce Shirley Temple in her most important role.

When the noted author heard that Miss Temple had been cast as Mytyl, he wrote her as follows: "You are the one person in the world whom I myself would have chosen for the role."

The Technical Director's Page

by LESLIE ALLEN JONES

Lecturer, Extension Division, Brown University, Providence, R. I.

The Stone Fireplace

IN the issue for September-October, 1938, I spoke of stage fireplaces in general. Now, in answer to several requests, I will go further into detail in the matter of the construction of a stone fireplace.

The drawing on this page shows the front and back sections of such a fireplace. Build these out of one-by-three batten stock, or if your fireplace is to be fairly small, out of one-by-two screen stock. All joints should be butt-jointed. That is, joined by means of corner blocks and key-stones. These plywood splices will be on the reverse side of the work, so that a smooth front is presented.

A good size for such a fireplace is five feet in width, eighteen inches in depth, and four feet high. Or you can make it four feet wide. The hood shown in the drawing is a separate piece entirely, and such a hood may be built of painted cloth to represent plaster. So may the fireplace frame—covered with cloth or beaver-board, with the addition of real moulding trim—but we are supposing you want your fireplace to resemble rough stone.

The two frames are joined by short pieces of wood, as in the sketch in the lower left of my drawing. Next comes the foundation of chicken wire—any width. You will want tin snips and some small staples for fastening it to the frame. Don't make the mistake some of my friends

once did of covering the back, too—stick to the three sides. The edges of the wire are brought around to the back of the frame and underneath to the back—down on the back from the top, and fastened with staples. Tap the wire flat around the edge of the batten with a hammer.

When the wire is loosely laid and fastened in place take a pair of pliers and pull up the wire here and there to make bumps for rocks. The flexibility of chicken wire is the reason for using it. Lay the fireplace flat on its back and put your foot on it to hold it down as you pull here and there. Punch depressions where you can. Note in the drawing that the wire is left quite loose around the front corners of the frame and along the front edges of the fireplace opening. These rolled edges are banged and bumped to be irregular.

I am well aware of another method of rock construction—that of padding and building up the surface with irregular blocks of wood. But I have found the unsupported chicken wire a lighter and easier means of construction. The art of making a convincing rock is much more difficult when complicated by blocks of wood and bumps of padding.

Now comes the dirty work—the application of paper strips. First, let us make everything ready. We must have our glue hot, with perhaps a little whitening or color added to make more body. The glue is a half and half mixture—one half bucket of

flake glue filled with water, allowed to soak three or four hours, then heated in a double-boiler arrangement. This can be done quite simply by placing the glue bucket into another partially filled with water, with a half brick or block of wood in the bottom.

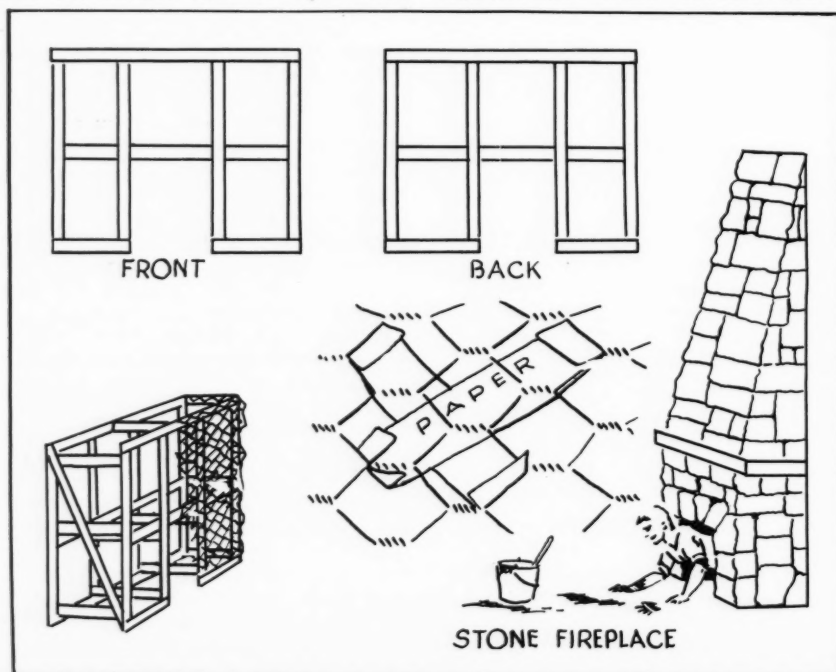
Newspaper or wrapping paper—use anything you have. Take a stiff-backed razor blade and cut the material into strips about three inches wide—or fold and tear. Get another bucket, or a pan of warm water, and have an old towel handy. This is for your hands, for glue will shrink the skin besides making you feel messy. A very good idea is to wear rubber gloves or rub cold cream well around your fingernails before starting to work. One can use cloth scraps instead of paper.

Dip the paper or cloth strip into the bucket of glue. Squeeze out gently and smooth out on the chicken wire, tucking the ends through the wire as shown in the drawing, and pasting down between your fingers. If you have help, stand the fireplace up and place one person behind to pat down the ends as they fall through. There is no pattern to follow in placing this first coat of covering. Criss-cross to help bind the layer to the wire, and lay on three or more coats of paper. A stunt to remember is this—a layer of newspaper might be followed by a layer of brown wrapping paper. In this way you will know, when you have the newspaper all hidden under the brown paper, that you have skipped no places in the surface. Now you cannot bind the paper strips to the wire all over the fireplace without leaving holes, so don't worry about it. Bind through to the back where you can, and trust the glue to do the rest. Hands sticky? Feel sort of drying and cracking? Dip them into the warm water, wipe on the towel and cold cream them again.

When the fireplace has been completely covered, you can wash your hands for the final time and go home. It should dry overnight in a warm place. You will find it hard as flint when you return, but do not expect it to look like a stone fireplace overnight. It will be a strange thing of bumps and hollows, incredibly light in weight.

And now let us take a walk to look at stones. Of course, I do not know where in this country of ours you who read this may be. I have seen most of it in my travels and remember well the brilliant colorings of the rock in the Yellowstone—the red sandstone—the granite of Maine. So there is color in stone, much color. Greens and reds, blues and purples—what a mistake it would be to paint our stone fireplace a dull and drab gray! In painting stone for the theatre there is that strange thing called theatrical license. We are allowed to put just a little more color in our stone than would be found in nature—much as the actress reddens her cheeks to look more natural under the glare of the lights.

Lay out your palette in this manner.



First, a bucket with some working size—made by adding a pint of glue (half and half) to a half bucket of water. This is at working strength for painting. Another bucket half full of water for washing brushes. Brushes? A four-inch and several sash tools or liners. On a piece of cardboard or outspread newspaper place little heaps of *orange mineral, ultramarine blue, raw sienna, burnt sienna, whiting*. And some green, which you can, of course, make of blue and yellow. Mix a little gray in another bucket or pan, out of whiting, raw sienna and blue.

Take one of the small brushes and dip it into the size water, and push it into the side of one of your piles of color until the brush is charged or loaded. Dab this color on a projection of the fireplace—where a rock juts out. A little red and a little green, perhaps. Take another brush (a four-inch) and paint around this spot of color. When your brush is fairly dry, blend the color into the gray. This is the procedure for one rock—follow it for all the others.

When you have finished your blended painting and the work has dried, lighten your gray in the bucket with a handful of whiting. Use this color as the cement between your stones, and with a small brush mark off the intersecting stones, taking care you have not made a too regular pattern. Now mix a little bit of purple, using blue and orange mineral. If it seems too bright, gray it with a little dab of yellow. This is the hard-cutting line which will point up the painted stonework. Study the stone and place a very thin broken line beneath each stone. Don't forget to smudge up the interior of your fireplace. A black, dragged with a dry brush, will allow you to believe a fire has smutted the stones.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Recently, we had some half circle sweeps cut to make some round top arches. Fastening with keystone and clout nails we have had trouble with the lower edge of the sweep splitting. Can you help us—P. H., Vermont.

In cutting sweeps (which are the segments of a circle used to frame the edge of a half circular opening) it is well to have the lower edge, which is to fasten smoothly into a vertical stile, taper to almost nothing. It is then possible to cut back the edge of the stile and set the sweep in so that the curve continues unbroken down the side of the opening. Now you can fasten with clout nails and keystone at the top of the sweep, where you have plenty of wood to work with, but at the bottom simply drill a hole in the seven-eighths stile and fasten with a single long screw. It is always awkward to anchor the lower end of a sweep with a keystone, for the wood does not give a proper field for a clout nail.

Won't you tell us how we can save money on cloth for covering scenery? The cost of a bolt of seventy-two inch canvas would break up our treasury.—M. V., Ohio.

While it is true that the professional scenic firms use a light fire-proofed canvas in wide widths, and sometimes use heavy linen which is grand to paint, that is no reason why the amateur cannot have good scenery at lower cost. To begin with—in the seventy-two-inch width, see if some merchant in town can get for you at wholesale cost a bolt of unbleached cotton sheeting. Then there are the mail-order houses—the bigger the better—with their sales of cotton at frequent intervals. Remnant stores are fertile fields for searching. This summer I saw a summer stock company with most of its scenery covered with blue and white striped bed ticking! Of course, when it was painted the audience never suspected and only the reverse side of the scenery, which the audience never sees, gave the game away. I don't particularly recommend flowered patterns that might have dye color that would be hard to hide, but any smooth surfaced material can be used that has sufficient strength and weight. Let cotton sheeting be your guide.

It is not necessary to stick to the seventy-two-inch width. Much good scenery has been painted on thirty-six-inch stock. Some artists prefer a drop, which has horizontal seams, to be made of the narrow width. To cover a five-nine wing, simply sew a flat seam along the selvege and use two widths thus sewn. And if you have remnants that you wish to use, never mind a horizontal seam across a wing. The seams will not show when the scenery is painted.

Then there is paper. Don't laugh, but another summer theatre near my home used paper to cover its frames. Paper, in a wide roll, is tacked and pasted down exactly as cloth—a tear or rip can be patched—and from the audience point of view the scenery looks like all other. But if you plan to ever paint over or keep your scenery, try to use cloth—it is so much more permanent.

What about this stage peg business? Will they, or will they not damage floors? Our stage has a polished hardwood floor.—V. B., Ky.

May I join with you in heartily blessing the man who installed polished hardwood floors on your stage? That is a very high crime and can be laid at the door of the architect or the building committee. Perhaps they thought they were doing their best, so let's not be too hard on them. A stage peg, properly installed, does not injure a stage floor in the slightest, but it would mar a polished surface. A stage peg, by the way, is never screwed into the wood of the floor itself, but rather between two floor boards in a crack. Hold the peg point down in your hand, wriggle the point into the crack, and as you screw it down it will tend to force apart

the two boards, and they will spring back when the peg is unscrewed.

You can sometimes nail, with small finish nails toeing in, a short piece of two by four with a hole bored in it smaller than the screw on the peg. The finish nails can be pulled out, and once a season the small holes left in the floor can be puttied.

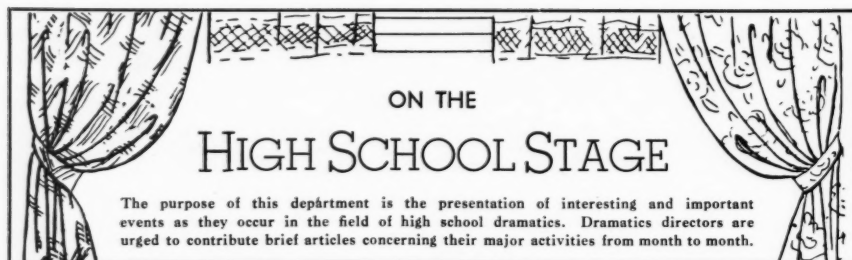
Build a square box a foot high and of seven-eighths stock. Cover the bottom with a piece of old carpeting, pulling the sides of that piece around so that you can tack them on the sides. Fill the box with sand or old iron, and before you nail on the cover bore a hole for a carriage bolt about two inches long. Get a regular nut and washer to hold the bolt upright, and a wing nut to screw over the stage brace when it is fitted to the bolt.

Or dispense with stage braces and use jacks fitted with a projecting foot of flat board on which you can set weights.

Can you help me in suggesting the construction of a torch, or flambeau for use on the stage?—E. B., Iowa.

Personally, I hate an open flame on any stage. But I realize that for some effects, nothing is quite so effective. I have used torches made in the following manner: Take a small tin can about two inches high and two inches in diameter. Using a short piece of broomstick or other round stock as a handle, drive a single nail through the bottom of the tin and into one end of the stick. This handle should be at least two feet in length, so that the flame may be held high and away from inflammable costumes and scenery. Take a wad of cotton and pack the inside of the can, and saturate with alcohol (rubbing alcohol is good). Light just before using. Such a torch will give a lazy blue-yellow flame, and will burn for a long time. Another can slightly larger than the one used as a cup on the torch should be kept handy to cap over the torch and extinguish it. Always chart out the path to be followed by the torch-bearer and be sure that there are no overhead hangings near the march of the flame.

For a fire in a brazier I suggest a small electric fan, or a rubber tube connected to a bellows. Lay the fan in the bottom of the fire container, crackle some gelatine color sheets, or colored cellophane and place over the fan or tube opening. Make a grid of wire (from an old coat hanger) and to this grid, which will hold the cellophane or gelatine color medium in place, fasten short streamers of colored silk. Orange and red silk rayon, red and blue and yellow gelatine. A small light bulb is placed beneath all, and if the fan is connected with the bulb to a dimmer, the movement of the dimmer will cause the flames to lift and fall, and the light to rise and dim in a very good manner. The rubber tube idea can be worked offstage by the bellows intermittently to gain the same effect. This bellows method is advocated where the noise of the electric fan would spoil the action of the play.



ON THE

HIGH SCHOOL STAGE

The purpose of this department is the presentation of interesting and important events as they occur in the field of high school dramatics. Dramatics directors are urged to contribute brief articles concerning their major activities from month to month.

Millersburg, Pa.

Mrs. Emma Mary Hubsch, sponsor for Troupe No. 79 at Millersburg High School, reports that her Thespians have an ambitious program outlined for this season. Major dramatic activities began with the production of *Little Women* on November 30, the stage set being designed and built by boys of the junior year, with senior boys supervising the work. A group of sophomore and senior girls collected and fitted the costumes. On December 22, Thespians will present with the assistance of the Junior Dramatics Club, *The Bird's Christmas Carol*, as a special assembly program. Thespians are also active this season in the study of the history of drama and the technical aspects of play production. At least twenty students are expected to qualify for Thespian membership as a result of this year's dramatic program.—*Helen Doney, Secretary.*

Superior, Neb.

Emphasis on public speaking, dramatics, and debate is being stressed this year at Superior High School (Thespian Troupe No. 337) under the direction of Mr. Harold Ahrendts. Two new courses in Speech have been added, and Thespian activities are being re-organized. To qualify for Thespian membership, a student must be interested in dramatics, have an earnest desire to help the school's standing in this activity, participate in a play, serve as a member of the stage crew, and have at least an average grade in regular school work. Mr. Ahrendts also reports that a number of social activities will be included on his Thespian program for this season.

East Haven, Conn.

New Troupe officers consisting of Ella Slocum, president; Thelma Anderson, vice-president; Lillian Levine, secretary, and Marion Barrman, treasurer, were elected early this fall at East Haven High School (Thespian Troupe No. 63), under the direction of Miss Louise Scott. A *Lucky Break* was given on November 23, 24, as the first major play of this season. Thespians are devoting their troupe meetings to a study of pantomime and make-up.—*Marion Barrman, Secretary.*

Abilene, Texas

Mr. C. B. Ford, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 353 at Abilene High School, reports the test production of a new play, *Youth Takes Over*, for Samuel French early this fall. Plans for this year tentatively call for the production of *The Bat* as the Senior Class play, and the production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* as the major production of the season. *Hamlet* was given as the major production for the 1938-39 year. Mr. Ford will act as chairman of the section on dramatics at the Texas Speech Teachers' Convention scheduled for December 1 at San Antonio, Texas.

Ashtabula, Ohio

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 163 at Ashtabula Harbor High School, with Mr. C. Richard Orr as sponsor, presented *Annie Laurie* on May 12 as the major production of

the 1938-39 season. Olive Dunne, Armour Wright, and Marion Maki gave outstanding performances. Earlier in the year the Senior Class gave Owen Davis's Pulitzer Prize winner, *Icebound*, in which Olive Dunne and John Keto played the leading roles. Late in February the Juniors gave as their class play, *Spring Fever*, an excellent performance in every respect. As a result of a busy season twenty-one students were admitted to Thespian membership at a special recognition program given before the student body. For her outstanding work in dramatics, Olive Dunne was presented with the Dramatic Medal, which is given annually to the most outstanding Thespian at this school. "Ye Merrie Players," the Senior High dramatic club presented several one-act plays during the season before local organizations and clubs.

Roslyn Heights, N. Y.

The dramatics activities for the past year at Roslyn High School included many original plays. The most outstanding of these were *An American Cavalcade*, a three-act play written by a ninth grade class; *Zenger's Trial*, a two-act play based on censorship of the press, written by a sophomore class, and *Understanding America*, a three-act play written by a senior class. The season also included the production of the Senior Class play, *320 College Avenue*; the Junior Class play, *It's Papa Who Pays*, and a production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, staged by the class in Journalism. Several one-act plays were also given during year. Mrs. Gladys F. Lewis directed all productions.

Charleston, W. Va.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 200 at Charleston High School will open the present dramatics season with a production of *Kempy* on December 1, with Mr. Lawrence W. Smith as director. Thespians were responsible for a series of five fifteen-minute broadcasts over Station WCHA from September 18 through September 22. Each broadcast was based on an episode from *Treasure Island*.—*Jean Carson, Secretary.*

Shenandoah, Ia.

Once There Was a Princess was given by the Junior Class on November 16, 17, as the first full-length play of the present season at Shenandoah High School (Thespian Troupe No. 133). The year began with the one-act plays, *Three Pills in a Bottle* and *Green Shadows*, staged by the Girl Reserves early in October. *Elmer* was given on October 27 as a part of the Sophomore chapel program. Miss May Virden is in charge of dramatics and Thespian activities.—*Phyllis Lyden, Secretary.*

Newport News, Va.

Miss Dorothy M. Crane, Thespian Regional Director for the State of Virginia, reports two performances of Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize winning play, *Our Town*, on November 16 and 17, as the first major dramatic production of this year at Newport News High School (Thespian Troupe No. 122).

Terre Haute, Ind.

Prof. Robert W. Masters, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 378 at the Laboratory High School, State Teachers College, reports the production of two children's plays, *Pinnocchio* and *Peter Pan*, on October 14 and 15 of this fall. Both plays were given in conjunction with the Children's Theatre of Terre Haute. Plans for the year call for a Christmas play, a play for the Speech Arts Festival early in the spring, a special exhibit, also for the Speech Arts Festival, and the production of other dramatic projects for special occasions. Prof. and Mrs. Masters are the authors of a new book, *The Curtain Rises*, published by D. C. Heath & Co.

Pontiac, Mich.

Members of the Playcrafters Dramatics Club (Thespian Troupe No. 296) of Pontiac Senior High School held their semi-annual Parents' Reception on Wednesday, October 18. In addition to various exhibits, the program included the production of a one-act play, *Wienies On Wednesday*, and a puppet show, *The King of the Golden River*, written and manipulated by Harvey Place, a Playcrafters alumnus. Mr. W. N. Viola, Troupe sponsor and dramatics director at this school, directed the production of *Dulcy* for the General Motors Players of Detroit. The play was presented on November 10 in the Detroit Art Institute auditorium.

Mount Vernon, Ind.

Two full-length plays are on the dramatics schedule this year at Mount Vernon High School (Thespian Troupe No. 114), under the direction of Miss Catharine L. Howard. The first, *New Fires*, was given on November 16. The second play, not chosen as yet, will be



Scene from the Junior Class play, *TONS OF MONEY*, staged at Colfax, Washington, High School (Thespian Troupe No. 329). Directed by Miss Mabel Howard.

BEST THESPIAN ROLL OF HONOR 1938-39 SEASON

Students whose names appear below were chosen as "Best Thespians" for their respective troupes for the 1938-39 school year, an honor awarded for superior work in the interests of dramatics and faithfulness to the ideals of the National Thespian Dramatic Honor Society for High Schools.

John McGuire, Troupe No. 314, Staples, Minn., High School.
Louise Livie, Troupe No. 333, Burlington High School, Burlington, Wash.
Barbara Curtis, Troupe No. 336, Winslow, Arizona, High School.
Laura Jane Myers, Troupe No. 342, Roosevelt High School, Dover, Ohio.
Jean Conrad, Joan Mesimer, Troupe No. 351, Polo, Mo., High School.
Marjorie Batson, Elizabeth Youssi, Troupe No. 352, Robbinsdale, Minn., Sr. High School.
Rose Ann D'Alfonso, John Mansell, Troupe No. 354, Penn High School, Greenville, Pa.
Robert Grant, Mary Byrd Newcomer, Troupe No. 355, St. Mary's High School, Clarksburg, W. Va.
Mary Jane Lora, Richard Capel, George Steffel, Troupe No. 358, Salem, Ohio, High School.
John Scofield, Troupe No. 359, Clinton-Lyons High School, Clinton, Iowa.
Ingrid Lahti, Virginia Paine, Troupe No. 366, City High School, Ashtabula, Ohio.
William Waite, Troupe No. 368, Geneva, Ohio, High School.

Luly Frances Moss, Troupe No. 371, George Washington High School, Alexandria, Va.
Mary Jo Campbell, Troupe No. 372, Wellsburg, W. Va., High School.
Frances Bradley, Troupe No. 375, Erskine Ramsay High School, Birmingham, Ala.
Marjorie Bestor, Troupe No. 378, Newton, Iowa, High School.
Betty Booker, Bob Jacobson, Troupe No. 190, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, High School.
Juanita Hansen, Troupe No. 112, Norfolk, Neb., High School.
Betty Vandermuelen, Troupe No. 286, Western Hills High School, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Laura Harbison, Troupe No. 24, Morgantown, N. C., High School.
Joseph Salisbury, Troupe No. 92, Springville, Utah, High School.
D. J. Blount, Troupe No. 149, Paragould, Ark., High School.
Gertrude de Grange, Troupe No. 254, B. M. C. Durfee High School, Fall River, Mass.
Edsel Owsley, Troupe No. 125, Wetumpka, Ala., High School.
Eddie Kiehn, Troupe No. 4, Ritzville, Washington, High School.

given in May. The year also includes the operetta, *Tune In*. Plans also call for the production of a few assembly plays, a radio play, participation in the Indiana State Festival early in the spring, and the annual Christmas Reunion.—Lucille Redman, *Secretary*.

Paonia, Colo.

One of the three plays, *The Goose Hangs High*, *Our Girls*, or *Night Must Fall*, will be produced as the full-length play for this semester at Paonia High School (Thespian Troupe No. 367), under the direction of Mr. Glen Haley. Plans for the semester also include an Armistice Day program, production of the one-act play, *Seeing the Elephant*, attendance at some of the outstanding motion pictures with group discussions afterwards, and a special campaign to build interest in dramatics among the lower classes in school. New equipment is being added this year to the stage and auditorium.—Catherine Crissman, *Secretary*.

Canastota, N. Y.

Tentatively scheduled for production on December 1 at Canastota High School is a production of the play, *A Murder Has Been Arranged*, with Miss Helen M. Jacobs, sponsor for Troupe No. 46, as the director. Present plans also call for a Christmas play, production of the operetta, *Pirates of Penzance*, by the Music Department, and several one act plays to be given during the spring. Make-up will be studied as a special project during the month of January. Plans are also being made to enter a drama festival in March.—Hamilton Mero, *Secretary*.

Springfield, Minn.

With Miss Helen R. Thornburg as the new sponsor for Troupe No. 71 at Springfield High Schools, the dramatics season opened this year with the Fall Play Program on November 24, which included the one-act plays, *His First* and *Stion* was directed by Mr. Wayne Gregory.

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Dress Suit, *Wienies on Wednesday*, and selections given by the Junior and Senior Chorus Reading Groups. Plans for this semester also include an exchange program with Sleepy Eye High School, and the production of *Why the Chimes Rang* on December 19. Members of the dramatics club attended the production of *Our Town* at the University of Minnesota on October 28.—DeLaine Haering, *Secretary*.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Maxwell Anderson's *The Star Wagon* was given by the Junior Players of Walnut Hills High School on November 10. The production was directed by Mr. Wayne Gregory.



Scene from Glen Haley's production of *ADAM AND EVE* at Paonia, Colorado, High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 367.)

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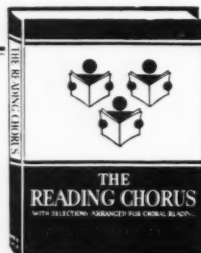
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Oak Hill, W. Va.

The second annual one-act play festival for Fayette County was held on April 20 of last spring at Oak Hill High School, with E. R. Vawter and Hugh Clark as critics. Entries included *Silence Please*, Fayetteville High School; *Mushrooms Coming Up*, Ansted High School; *Violet Moves In*, Montgomery High School; *White Flowers*, Kingston High School; *Dress Reversal*, Gauley Bridge High School; and *Sauce for the Goslings*, Oak Hill High School. *Polishing Papa* was given on May 19 as the annual Senior Class Play at Oak Hill High School. A major event of the present semester at this school is the establishment of National Thespian Troupe No. 388 with Miss Zella C. Bishop as sponsor.

Picher, Okla.

Miss Martha Buntin, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 262 at Picher High School, writes that a number of activities in dramatics are being sponsored this season and that the year promises to be a very successful one in dramatics for her school. Recent activities included the production of three one-act plays, a carnival, a choral reading program, and a number of assembly programs, including a living newspaper program. Late in October preparations were being made for the production of the one-act plays, *Knives From Syria*, *The Aunt From California*, and *The Magic Mirror*, and a Forum for National Education Week.

The first full-length play of the season, *Mystery at Midnight*, was given by Thespians on November 14. The second major productions, *Alice in Amazement*, will be produced on December 4 by a group of Junior students. Plans for this semester also call for a Christmas pageant to be given on December 22. Monthly luncheons, which provide an opportunity to plan activities for the ensuing month, are held regularly by the dramatics students of this school. New stage equipment, including a cyclorama, was purchased early this fall.

Cripple Creek, Colo.

Troupe No. 381 was formally installed on October 28 at Cripple Creek High School, with

Miss Clara G. Hogg as sponsor. Seven students formed the charter roll. The first long play of the present season, *Nothing But the Truth*, was given on November 9 and 10. Plans for this semester also call for the presentation of a special Christmas program on December 19.—*Dorothy Zimmermann, Secretary.*

Lincoln, Ill.

With Mr. Lloyd E. Roberts in charge of Thespian and dramatics activities at Lincoln High School this season, dramatic activities began on September 28 with the Annual Carnival which included the production of three one-act plays, *Tarnished Witherspoons*, *The Man Upstairs*, and *Lady in Black*. Thespians sponsored *Memories of 1918* as an Armistice Day program on November 10. The first full-length play of this season, *Death Takes a Holiday*, was given on November 21. Other activities for this semester include the production of a special three-act nativity play on December 18. An interesting feature of this year's work is the class discussion each Monday in dramatics class of the preceding Sunday's "Great Play" broadcast by NBC. A series of Radio broadcasts are being planned for the spring semester.—*Tom Ryan, Secretary.*

Fall River, Mass.

Writing and producing three original plays at a matinee in November was the first important event of the fall semester in dramatics at B. M. C. Durfee High School (Thespian Troupe No. 254). Participation in these original plays completed Thespian requirements for a number of Seniors. Other plans for this year include the production of "Curtain at Eight," a group of three one-act plays, in December, and the production of the operetta, *The Mikado*, in February. A large group of students will be admitted to Thespian membership this semester under the direction of Miss Barbara Wellington and Miss Elizabeth L. Leonard. Troupe officers for this year are George Fernandez, in charge of membership; Mildred Seares, secretary; Bernard Horowitz, president; and Ruth Knott, treasurer.—*Mildred Ann Seares, Secretary.*



National Thespian banquet held at the close of the 1938-39 season at Jeanette High School, Jeanette, Pa. (Thespian Troupe No. 304.)

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Darien, Conn.

Beginners Luck was given as the Senior Class play on November 17 as the first long play of the present season at Darien High School, with Miss Elsa Pettersson directing. During the month of October two one-act plays, *Apostrophe in Modern Dress* and *The Great Allowance Battle*, were given as assembly programs. Tentatively planned for this year is a series of broadcasts over Station WICC and the Yankee Network, details of which were not completed at the time of this writing. Miss Pettersson writes that the aim of her department is to give everyone interested in dramatics a chance to appear on the stage at least once during the year.—*Betty Harrington, Secretary.*

Prophetstown, Ill.

Thespians of Troupe No. 244 at Prophetstown High School meet once a month at the home of one of the members, each meeting being devoted to a discussion of plays with entertainment afterwards. The present season opened with the Junior Class play, *Parents and Pigtales*, staged on November 3. The one-act play, *Bett's Best Bet*, produced by dramatics club students, is being presented before various groups in the community. Thespians will present a one-act play as a part of the Christmas program this year.—*Anita Mumhart, Secretary.*

Bridgeport, Pa.

An original revue by Miss Sadie M. Daher, sponsor for Troupe No. 139, will be the main feature of a Christmas Carnival to be produced in December at Bridgeport High School. The one-act plays, *Thanks Awfully*, *Miss Marlow at Play*, and *Grandma Pulls the String*, are being given this season as part of exchange programs with nearby high schools. Special projects in dramatics included study of make-up, acting and stagecraft. Most of these projects are

directed by Thespians under Miss Daher's supervision. Thespians expect to attend several professional plays this year.

Champaign, Ill.

320 College Avenue opened the season of full-length plays on October 25 at Champaign High School (Thespian Troupe No. 106), under the direction of Miss Marion Stuart. The second major production of this semester will be the musical comedy, *Go West Young Man*, scheduled for production on December 4, 5. Other activities for this fall includes the inter-class contests in speech events. Plans also include a bill of one-acts to be produced on January 19, and a special Christmas assembly program.—*Helen Bright, Secretary.*

Haddon Heights, N. J.

The popular *Growing Pains* was chosen this fall as the Junior Class play at Haddon Heights High School (Thespian Troupe No. 376). The play was presented on November 17, with Mrs. Helen L. Plumer directing. Much interest is being shown in the play, *They That Sit in Darkness*, which will be given as a Christmas play on December 15.

The Dalles, Ore.

Mr. Albert C. Hingston, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 374 at The Dalles High

School, reports the production of R. C. Sheriff's *Journey's End* on November 9 as the first major play of this season at his school. Mr. Hingston also reports that his group was given the honor of producing, on November 30 and December 1, the premiere production of *He Who Hesitates*, the latest play by George Savage and John McRae. The play is being produced from the original manuscript and the publishers, Row, Peterson and Company, will use pictures and names of the cast when the play will be published this coming spring. Both authors, as well as many interested groups from nearby schools and colleges, will attend the "First Night" production.

Members of the Teska Dramatics Club and National Thespians will again sponsor the Mid-Columbia one-act play contest this year. Last season, *The Valiant*, entered by The Dalles High School in this event was given first place. Dramatics students are building and planning a puppet and marionette stage and show as their project for this semester.

Jerseyville, Ill.

Mr. Alex Guinn, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 62 at Jersey Township High School, writes that his group will produce *Our Town* sometime in December. Two one-act plays, *The Prince of Arcadia* and *If Men Played Cards As Women Do*, are also being produced this semester. A new lighting system with a switchboard and dimmers is being installed this season. Thespians plan to enter the state one-act play tournament.

Tampa, Fla.

Major dramatic productions for this semester at H. B. Plant High School (Thespian Troupe No. 321), include the Broadway hit, *What a Life*, and the operetta, *The Mikado*. Plans also call for the production of the one-act plays, *Etiquette* and *The Pot Boiler*. Miss Dorothy Burnett is in charge of dramatics.—*Ruth Wisdom, Secretary.*

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Scenes from the production of *KIND LADY* as given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 60 at Boulder, Colorado, Senior High School. Directed by Mr. Ted Skinner.

Fort Benton, Mont.

The mystery drama, *The Eyes of Tlaloc*, scheduled for production on December 1, will be the first full-length play of the present year at Fort Benton High School (Thespian Troupe 195). Other dramatic activities for the fall semester include a speech class program of musical readings, novelty numbers and a one-act play, *A Bargain's a Bargain*, and the production of two other one acts, *Molly* and *The Ghost Hunters*, by Thespian students. Thespians will have charge of the speech class program. Miss Ila Grace Hagie directs dramatics and sponsors Thespian activities.—*Elsa Hagen, Secretary.*

Eveleth, Minn.

Several one-act plays are being given for school assembly programs this fall at Eveleth Senior High School (Thespian Troupe No. 165) under the direction of Miss Maurine Morgan. Thespians are also very active in sponsoring various activities for the purpose of raising funds for the troupe. The first initiation of the season was held on November.

Gassaway, W. Va.

Two long plays are included on the dramatic schedule for this semester at Gassaway High School (Thespian Troupe No. 80), with Miss Sally Sprigg directing the productions. The Junior Class play, *He Landed From London*, was given on November 16, and *Kid Colby* will be given on December 20. Two one-acts, *Solitaire* and *Afterwards*, will also be given during December. Other projects for this season include the production of a full-length play by Thespians, a membership drive, and attendance at two professional plays, one of which, *Hedda Gabler*, will have a Broadway cast.—*Phyllis Smith, Secretary.*

Elmhurst, Ill.

The operetta, *H. M. S. Pinafore*, presented as an all-school production on October 13, was the first important dramatic event of this season at York Community High School (Thespian Troupe No. 94) under the direction of Miss Doris E. White. This was followed by the Senior Class play, *The Imaginary Invalid*,

WELCOME, NEW TROUPES

A cordial welcome into the ranks of The National Thespian Dramatic Honor Society for High Schools is extended to the following troupes established since the first of October:

Miami, Florida, Edison Senior High School. Mrs. Willette Vogh, sponsor.
Tonganoxie, Kansas, High School. Miss Marion L. Williams, sponsor.
Atwood, Illinois, Township High School. Miss Barbara C. Brice, sponsor.
Cripple Creek, Colorado, High School. Miss Clara G. Hogg, sponsor.
Canton, Illinois, High School. Mr. E. A. Snively, sponsor.
Montrose, Colorado, County High School. Miss Louise Bertagnolli, sponsor.
Custer, South Dakota, High School. Miss Eva Nelson, sponsor.
Centerville, Iowa, High School. Mr. Bernard D. Greeson, sponsor.
Marietta, Ohio, High School. Miss Lucy A. Stacy, sponsor.
Orville, Ohio, High School. Mr. P. K. Howells, sponsor.
Oak Hill, West Virginia, High School. Miss Zella C. Bishop, sponsor.
Plant City, Florida, High School. Mr. David E. Bailey, sponsor.
Greybull, Wyoming, High School. Mr. Forrest H. Petterson, sponsor.
Miami Beach, Florida, Senior High School. Miss Muriel Mahoney, sponsor.
Monrovia-Arcadia-Duarte High School, Monrovia, Calif. Mrs. Carolyn K. Doty, sponsor.
Gadsden High School, Quincy, Fla. Miss Lois Witter, sponsor.
Oceanside, New York, High School. Miss Frances Weaver, sponsor.
Edward Lee McClain High School, Greenfield, Ohio. Mr. Wylie Fetherlin, sponsor.
Mead, Washington, Union High School. Mrs. Dorothy Moore Villa, sponsor.
Buhl, Idaho, High School. Mr. William Shively, sponsor.

staged on November 10, 11. Other plans for this year include the production of a number of one-act plays after Christmas, and the annual Thespian production, *Drama Nite*, which consists of three one-act plays. Thespians are building sets for all class productions and assisting with make-up for the all-school productions.—*June Mulvey, Secretary.*

Cheyenne, Wyo.

Two one-act plays, *Backstage* and *The Undoing of Albert O'Donnell*, produced for assembly programs late in October, opened the dramatic program for this season at Cheyenne Senior High School under the direction of Miss Mary E. Stewart. The first major production, *When Stars Shine*, is scheduled for production on December 2. Other projects for this year include the organization of an understudy dramatic club for students who wish to engage in additional dramatic work in order to become eligible for membership in the National Thespian Society.

Bloomington, Ind.

Several Thespian troupes from Indiana participated in the seventh annual drama conference sponsored by the University of Indiana, at Bloomington, on November 17, 18. Miss Mildred Murray, sponsor for troupe No. 57 at Columbus High School, presented a cutting from the play, *Early To Bed—Early To Rise*. Bloomington High School (Thespian Troupe No. 142, with Mrs. Laura G. Childs as sponsor) was represented with a production of the one-act play, *Captain's Cabin*, directed by Mr. Wayne Farrow. Mrs. Elsie Ball, sponsor for Troupe No. 21, at Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, presented a cutting from the play, *Our Town*. A scene from the children's play, *Pinocchio*, which created much interest, was given by the Children's Theatre of Terre Haute, under the direction of Mr. Robert W. Masters. Mr. Masters sponsors Thespian Troupe No. 378 at the Teachers College Laboratory High School in Terre Haute and was recently appointed Regional Director for the state of Indiana. The conference was arranged and directed by Mr. George Blair, an alumnus of Troupe No. 142 and now director of the Library Loan Service at Indiana University.

Alamogordo, New Mex.

New Fires, staged as the Junior Class play on November 29, was the first major play of the present season for Alamogordo High School (Thespian Troupe No. 81). Early in October, four one-act plays, *Flambo*, *the Clown*, *Ask Nancy*, *Girl From Weepah*, and *Crystal Crazy*, were given as a full evening program of try-out plays for the Thalian Club. Other activities in dramatics this semester include the construction of scenery for the stage and publishing a page of news items in the school paper. Yearbooks compiled by members of Troupe No. 81 are also being planned for this year. These will include monthly programs held by the troupe, names of officers and members, etc. Thespian activities for the year will include a study of plays, motion pictures, and puppets, and the writing of an original play concerning the history of New Mexico. Miss Edith L. Welsheimer directs dramatics.—*Tena Wilborn, Secretary.*

Chardon, Ohio

Twenty-three students were admitted to Thespian membership last season at Chardon High School (Thespian Troupe No. 334). Full-length plays produced during the year included the senior class play, *Cradle Song*, staged in December, and the junior class play, *Once in a Lifetime*, given on May 19. The season also included several one-act plays presented at the assembly programs, and a pageant staged for the Geauga County Maple Festival. *Uncle Jimmy* was presented in the Geauga County Play Festival, and later in the North-eastern Ohio High School Drama Festival held at Kent State University on April 14, 15, where it received *Superior Rating*, with Lynn Hesford chosen as the best actor on the All-Regional Cast. All dramatics, including sponsorship of the troupe, were supervised and directed by Mr. I. A. Canfield.

Burlington, Wash.

Seven one-act plays were staged last season at Burlington High School (Thespian Troupe No. 333) under the direction of Miss Patricia Ryan. The year also included the production of the all-school play, *Growing Pains*, staged on November 4, and the senior class play, *The Late Christopher Bean*, produced on March 31. The annual school vodvil was staged in December. Twelve students qualified for Thespian membership.

Olney, Ill.

Miss Claribel Lee, new sponsor for Troupe No. 292 at Olney Township High School, reports that no full-length plays will be given at her school until spring. Students are active, however, in a number of dramatics activities. Scenes from Cosgrove's *Scenes for Student Actors* are being dramatized as a project in dramatics. Two one-act plays, *Auf Wiedersehen* and *Obstinate Family*, were presented this fall as assembly plays. Thespian activities began early in October with the initiation of six new members.—*Suzanne Gossmann, Secretary.*

Clayton, Mo.

The 1939-40 dramatic season for Clayton High School (Thespian Troupe No. 322), under the direction of Mr. Blandford Jennings, opened on October 27 with the production of *Berkeley Square*. Much interest is being shown this year in the activities of the new class in make-up.—*Nadine Schiller, Secretary.*

Canton, Ohio

Two full-length plays are scheduled for production this year at Lehman High School (Thespian Troupe No. 66), under the direction of Miss Florence E. Hil. *Wings of the Morning* will be given on December 2, while *Skidding* is tentatively scheduled for production in April. The season will also include one operetta, the choice being either *Sweethearts* or *Going Up*. The one-acts, *Little Red Geranium* and *Three's a Crowd*, were given this fall on the Open House Program. *When the Chimes Rang* will be given as a part of a special Christmas program in December.

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A Comedy in Three Acts

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Albert is regarded as a thorough nuisance by his teachers, and though he may mean well he doesn't turn out well. In an effort to make him a credit to the school, Dr. Pierson, the new principal, appoints Albert president of the Young Citizen's League. In an effort to raise money to pay damages caused by Albert's mistakes, he and the league stage a carnival in the school gymnasium. The funds disappear. Then it is discovered that Albert has built "devices" which always pay off only for the carnival and never for the player. Mrs. Rathbone, sponsor of the League, loses heavily. The devices are destroyed, but there is considerable complication before it is discovered that the janitor placed the proceeds in the night depository of the bank. Albert turns out all right but only after some hilarious goings-on.

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Willoughby, Ohio

Four classes will be represented in a special "Stunt Night" program to be given on December 1 at Willoughby High School (Thespian Troupe No. 220) under the direction of Miss Cleo Sawyer. Two one-act plays, *Before the Curtain* and *Nancy Orr's Day*, were given during school assembly programs this fall. Members of the Troupe meet twice a month, meetings being devoted to a study of make-up, acting, and discussion of recent plays.—Lillian Daniels, Secretary.

Dodge City, Kansas

Three long plays were staged last year under the direction of Miss Leah Coyne at Dodge City High School. *Parents and Pigtales* opened the season on December 2. The play was given by the Hi-Y and F. R. Clubs. Late in February the junior class followed with a production of *Apron-String Revolt*, and the seniors closed the year on April 28 with a performance of *The Hidden Enemy*. The year also included an evening of one-act plays staged by members of Thespian Troupe No. 318 on October 1, the operetta *Rose of the Danube*, and the presentation of the one-act, *The Florist Shop*, in the play festival sponsored by Dodge City Junior College on March 17, 18. Six students were taken into the troupe during the year.

DeKalb, Ill.

Miss Gladys Hoffman, director of dramatics at DeKalb High School, reports the production of three one-act plays, *Auf Wiedersehen*, *The First White Woman* and *Sky-Fodder*, on October 19. In view of the large membership of the regular dramatics club which is made up of Juniors and Seniors, plans are being made this year to organize a Freshmen and Sophomore Group.

Bramwell, W. Va.

The junior class play, *One Delirious Night*, staged on November 4, and *Dotty and Daffy*, given by the senior class on March 17, were the two major plays given last season at Bramwell High School (Thespian Troupe No. 137), with Miss Ruth Casey as sponsor. The year also included a pageant entitled *America: Past and Present*, and the production of several one-act plays. *Wild Hobby-Horse* was presented in the local Thespian play festival held at Princeton High School on April 4. A total of seven new members were added to the troupe during the year.

Winslow, Ariz.

The 1938-39 dramatics season at Winslow High School (Thespian Troupe No. 336) included the production of the senior class play, *And Let Who Will Be Clever*, the junior class play, *Wedding Spells*, five one-act plays, the operetta, *The Count and the Co-ed*, and the contest play, *Ile*. Twelve students qualified

for membership. All activities, including sponsorship of the troupe, were under the supervision of Mr. K. M. Hurlbert.

Paris, Tenn.

Mrs. Clem Krider, sponsor for Troupe No. 198 at Grove High School, reports the production of two long plays at her school this semester. The first, *Little Women*, was given on November 17. The second, *Tom Sawyer*, will be given on December 8. Mrs. Krider also writes that her department now has a new club room large enough to accommodate an audience of forty or fifty, and that it will be used for experimental work before especially invited audiences. Thespians are now engaged in make-up practice.

Springfield, Utah

Thespian Day, to be observed on December 1, has been designated at Springfield High School, which has Troupe No. 92, under the sponsorship of Miss Bernice Park. On that day, Thespians will take charge of various school activities, including a special assembly program and a dance in the evening. The first play of the season, *Radio Rescue*, was given on October 20. *Spring Dance*, the second long play of the present semester, will be given on December 15. Two one-acts, *The Reefer Man* and *Drums of Oude*, are also being given this semester. Thespians are attending several of the plays given by the local colleges.—Ina Sanford, Secretary.

Newport, Vt.

Thespian activities at Newport High School (Troupe No. 107), with Mrs. Frances C. Byrne as the new sponsor, include the reading of a number of plays, make-up supervision of the fall productions, and plans for a class contest of one-act plays to be coached by Thespians. Two one-act plays, *An Excellent Thing in Woman* and *Salesman Jack*, were given early this fall. Plans for this semester also include the production of a Christmas drama for presentation at a special school assembly and at a joint meeting of Methodist Women's Clubs on December 13, 14.—Richard Buchanan, Secretary.

Cumberland, Md.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 230 at Fort Hill High School, under the direction of Miss Gerardine Pritchard, have developed a choral speaking choir which appears on assembly programs and before various community clubs. An important project for this fall was the one-act play tournament on November 10, 11, 12, entries all being directed by students. The first long play of the season, *Lavender and Old Lace*, will be presented on December 1. An operetta, not yet selected, will also be given as a part of this year's dramatic schedule.—Agnes Caporossi, Secretary.

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

Kansas City, Kans.

Two full-length plays, *Who Wouldn't Be Crazy?* and *Our Town*, are being given this semester at Wyandotte High School (Thespian Troupe No. 162) under the direction of Mr. Virgil Bergman. Also scheduled for production this season is the operetta, *Bells of Capistrano*, and the one-act plays, *In A Garden* and *The Municipal Davenport*. As a special project, students in dramatics are making scrapbooks containing various items of information pertaining to the theatre. Thespians have secured Mr. Thomas Harwitz to teach the fundamentals of make-up.—*Norma Roberts, Secretary.*

Colfax, Wash.

Three major productions were given during the spring of last season at Colfax High School. The first of these, *Tons of Money*, was given by the senior class. On April 12, 14, the senior class gave the second production, *The Bishop Misbehaves*. The third and last production of the year consisted of an evening of one-act plays, given by the dramatics club under the sponsorship of Thespian Troupe No. 329. The year also included the production of *Oh Doctor* with an all-school cast. Eleven students were admitted to membership under the direction of Miss Mabel Howard, director of dramatics at this school.

Clayton, Mo.

The senior class play, *Seven Sisters*, produced in November, and the production of *Candle-Light* by the dramatics guild in May, were the two major plays of the 1938-39 season at Clayton High School. Both productions were directed by Mr. Blandford Jennings, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 322. The season also included the production of several one-act plays. Thirteen students were given the Thespian oath.

Memphis, Tenn.

The production of *All the Rivers and Light* given early this fall, an Armistice Day Program, a Christmas play, and the presentation of the long play, *Three Girls And Jeffry*, late in November, are part of a busy dramatics scheduled for this semester at L. C. Humes High School (Thespian Troupe No. 249). Students are also making new stage scenery, and plans are being made for entry in the state one-act play contest. Thespians sponsored an open meeting on October 19 for the benefit of prospective members. New members were taken into the troupe in November under the direction of Miss Elsa A. Schilling, Troupe Sponsor.—*Dorothy Cruze, Secretary.*

Cincinnati, Ohio

Members of Troupe No. 286 sponsored the one long play given during the 1938-39 season at Western Hills High School, with Mrs. Vesta H. Watson as director. The year also included the production of several one-act plays. *The Happy Journey* received Superior Rating in the Southwestern Ohio High School Drama Festival held at the University of Cincinnati early in April of last spring. The play was also presented in the Ohio School Drama Festival held at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, early in May. A total of twenty-one students were taken into the society during the season.

Kenova, W. Va.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Anagene Bartram, the 1938-39 dramatics season proved unusually successful at Ceredo Kenova High School (Thespian Troupe No. 115). Thespians won first place in the local play festival and were privileged to present their play, *Somebody*, in the State Drama Festival held at Marshall College, Huntington, West Virginia, in April. Don Cunningham, a member of the cast, was chosen as a member of the All-State Cast. Thespians also sponsored the production of *The Adorable Spendthrift*. Sixteen students were admitted during the season.

Plans for this year call for a series of one-

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act plays, entry in the local drama festival, and a special campaign for "Better Dramatics" in the community. Thespians also plan to enter a national play-writing contest. Mrs. Bartram will have supervision of all dramatics activities.—*Ruth Hensley, Secretary.*

Jamestown, N. Y.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 364 at Jamestown High School, with Miss Myrtle L. Paetznick as sponsor, have organized and are directing a junior dramatic club in school this fall. Other projects for this season include a one-act play contest for junior high schools in the district, and a dramatic festival in the spring. Dramatic activities opened this fall with an evening of three one-act plays which included *The House in the Wind*, *Too Much Matrimony*, and *The Professor Roars*.—*Martha Bergwall, Secretary.*

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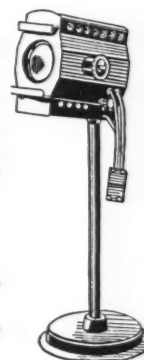
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"Certainly I have seen few performances which have so entirely dragged me under their absolute thrall, as this of Sybil Thorndike in *Double Door*. It is colossal, almost incredible. It begins quietly, though trenchantly; it grows pantingly to a grand climax in full stature; it subsides like a pricked balloon, as Victoria Van Bret collapses. ... it sets the cap on Dame Sybil's career." *The Era*, London

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What's New Among Books and Plays

EDITED BY H. T. LEEPER

Reviews appearing under this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. They are prepared with the hope that they prove of practical value to our readers.

The Dramatic Publishing Co., 53 East Van Buren Street, Chicago, Ill.

Professor, How Could You!, a farce in three acts, by Anne Coulter Martens. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$10. While in the midst of a grand row with a spitfire student called Vicky, woman-hating young professor Keats Perry is offered the position of Dean on condition that he acquires a wife. Keats asks his friends for help. Three candidates are brought in, including an entry by Vicky, who wants to get even with him. The three candidates pursue the harassed professor relentlessly, until his friend, John, dressed as a woman and poses as his abandoned wife. In the end Keats discovers that he loves Vicky and that she likes the idea. A fast, frivolous, and delightfully amusing high school farce.

Dramatist's Play Service, Inc., 6 East 39th St., New York City.

The Dark House, a mystery play in three acts, by Wall Spence. 8 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$15. This is a mystery melodrama containing all the usual mystery elements: the reading of the deceased eccentric's will, the disgruntled heirs, the mystifying murder, the disappearance of the fortune from the secret hiding place, the romance that almost goes wrong, and the clues that cast suspicion on each character in turn until the mystery is solved and the real culprit revealed. The play needs one set and offers high schools no particular difficulties of production.

You Can't Take It With You, a comedy in three acts, by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman. 12 m., 7 w. Royalty quoted on application. This much publicized Broadway and screen success about the slightly balmy Sycamore family has now been released for amateur use. The Sycamores spend all their time enjoying life with the oddest collection of hobbies ever gathered under one roof. The conflict comes when the daughter decides to marry the scion of a wealthy and very business-like family. She does, but not before a lot of funny things have happened. This play is certain to enjoy great popularity with high schools and other groups. It is very rich in acting opportunities, but will need careful casting.

The Perfect Young Man, a comedy in one act, by Thomas Seiler. 3 m., 2 w. Royalty, \$5.00. It is only a dream for Barbara, but it is enough to convince her that Perfection is dull. A beautiful play, well conceived and well written. Should prove a very happy choice for a festival or contest entry.

Samuel French, 22 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

Christmas, Incorporated, a play in one act, by Walter Kerr. 7 w. Royalty, \$5. Mary Lane, rebellious at the commercialization of Christmas by the store for which she works, sees, through the eyes of her employer's child, a new view of the same Christmas spirit she's always loved. This play presents an adequate interpretation of today's buying and selling of Christmas cheer. A very good, not too difficult piece especially suitable for assembly by girls' groups.

Once Upon A Christmas, a play in one act, by Alice Chadwicke. 7 w. Royalty, \$5. A beautiful portrayal of the belief that those of the spirit world care for those of earth makes this an unforgettable and different Christmas play. At a time when the Brookfield home is darkened by poverty, a woman's harsh words, and little Elsie's illness of a strange malady, Dr. C. Spirit, who has departed from this

world, stops on her way to the next to set their house in order before continuing on her journey.

Bachelor Born, a comedy in three acts, by Ian Hay. 11 m., 6 w. Royalty quoted on application. The unfamiliarity of the English boys' school atmosphere, made familiar to movie-goers by *Goodbye Mr. Chips*, may make this too difficult for some high schools. However, those high school groups that can attain it will find this a very fine piece of material with which to work. The central character, Charles Donkin, and amiable and understanding old English schoolmaster, offers particularly fine opportunity for characterization. Donkin, a confirmed bachelor, suddenly has dumped into his care three mischievous young ladies and their aunt. The girls live up the boys' school no end and start a movement to bring Donkin some well-deserved recognition. At first, their ministrations almost result in his discharge instead of the promotion he ultimately gets.

New School of Wives, a comedy in one act, by John Kirkpatrick. 2 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$5. An amusing little satire on the "finding oneself" idea. Ellen's chums, who have "found themselves," overdo their supposed personality types to an amusing extent. Ellen can't seem to find her type. It turns out best that way, because her best beau has found himself and wants a wife who won't outshine him.

Tish, a comedy in three acts, by Alice Chadwicke. 5 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$25. This adaptation of Mary Roberts Rinehart's popular novel follows the adventurous Tish and her two old-maid companions through the troubles they encounter in Tish's efforts "to lead the simpler life." Tish's escapades in capturing bandits, exposing smugglers, and helping young romance make this a lively play.

Eldridge Entertainment House, Inc., Franklin, Ohio.

Peekaboo Penny, a comedy in three acts, by Frank Spohn. 5 m., 4 w. No royalty. A strange assortment of people, expecting to be the actors in a play, gather in the hotel rooms of John Montgomery, play producer. In trying to shield himself as the thief who stole an emerald, Penny, the hotel detective, is exposed by a snooping girl newspaper reporter. A short, humorous play, easy to cast and produce.

A Home for Henry, a farce in three acts, by James F. Stone. 6 m., 8 w. No royalty. Aunt Catherine has agreed to pay for Henry Hill's new dream home, if he'll marry to please her. When she arrives, she finds his house full of people, including his fiancée, and is quarantined with the others for smallpox. Henry has a difficult time getting everything straightened out for a happy ending. Many laughs evolve from the humorous complications in this play.

Banner Play Bureau, Inc., San Francisco, Cal.

The Hutchinsons—Bless Them!, a comedy in three acts, by Edward J. Levy. 5 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$15. The bickering, quarrellings, and making-up of the Hutchinson family of five young folks, their mother and grandmother, make home a mad-house from which each of the children longs to escape. One by one they drift far enough away to realize that home is still home, returning just in time to find it saved for them by a Sweepstakes winning. An accurate presentation of an individualistic family with its many interests and troubles make this a riotous human play readily suited to high school audience and cast.

Walter H. Baker Co., 178 Tremont Street, Boston, Mass.

The Easy Christmas Book, collected and edited by Theodore Johnson. Price, 50c. This book contains a wide variety of material for Christmas programs. Included are two very short plays and several readings for adults or young people, a good many poems for children's recitations, and several plays, some quite charming, to be given for or by children. While the combining of children's material with that for older groups limits the book's entire use somewhat in the school, it makes it a valuable addition to the church library.

Wild Autumn, a comedy in three acts, by Frederick A. McCue. 5 m., 5 w. No royalty. Dick Mallon, a nice average boy from a nice average family, has become quite a college football star. The attendant glamor has so gone to his head that his friends, prospective employer, and even his family are disgusted with him. It takes a year of failure as a Freshman football coach to show him the true value of things. This is good non-royalty material for high schools, especially where the glories of football are over-emphasized among the students.

Are We Dressing?, a comedy in one act, by Don Pierre. 4 m., 4 w. Non-royalty. Mistaken identity leads to several amusing situations when the Millards call on the Andrews. Good, clean fun for high school groups. Recommended for assembly programs and for evenings of one-acts.

Mail Order Money, a comedy in one act, by Frederick Garrigus. 4 m., 4 w. Non-royalty. Seventeen-year-old Bill Patterson discovers that the business of answering all magazine advertisements and acting as agent for numerous mail order houses can place one into difficulty. A good play for assembly. Light but amusing.

The Northwestern Press, 2200 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn.

The Sunshine Twins, a comedy in three acts, by Dana Thomas. 5 m., 6 w. Royalty 15 per cent of gross income. The lovable, exasperating Robinson twins, being born on Christmas, consider it their duty to go about spreading sunshine and happiness, and setting their family to rights—to everyone's consternation. They do, indeed, revolutionize the family; Pop gets new courage and his much-wanted greenhouse; Glen gets a job; Norma loses her Hollywood ambitions and wins a millionaire husband; and Leo, the lamb, becomes Leo, the lion, taking his wife home to stay. This is a whimsical, genuinely human story of a family as real as the one next door. Very enjoyable and suited to high school production.

Lady, Be Good, a farce comedy in three acts, by Dana Thomas. 5 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$25. Patience Colt, the spoiled, beautiful, bad-tempered daughter of a wealthy radio corporation owner, is a terror. Getting into every kind of escapade, berating her aunt, and abusing the servants until they all quit are her delights. Then comes the new butler, whom she marries to spite her father. Very efficiently and completely, he tames her in a manner that proves her to be a thoroughbred after all. Well-drawn characters and natural situations full of riotous fun make this an unusually good comedy play with a feeling somewhat akin to *The Taming of The Shrew*.

Row, Peterson and Co., Evanston, Ill.

A Voice in the Dark, a comedy in three acts, by Jean Provence. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty quoted on application. This is a historical play of the period of 1773 to 1775. The action takes place in the Pine Tree Tavern, where Samuel Adams and Paul Revere meet for the furtherance of the cause of liberty. Some other interesting characters in the cast are Richard Shirley, a dashing young gentleman doing spy work for the Crown, a wealthy and ambitious matron, a British army captain, the lazy yarn-spinning landlord, and his patriotic daughter, Martha. The events leading to the Revolution are woven into the story. At the final curtain

we see Revere started on his memorable ride and Shirley won over to the patriots' cause through his love for Martha. This is a well-written play carrying a ring of historical authenticity in its characters. Ideal high school material.

The Merry Hares, a comedy in three acts, by Agnes Emelie Peterson. 5 m., 6 w. Royalty quoted on application. The members of the Hare family have something of the March Hare in their make-up, and live amid a barrage of gay and sophisticated repartee. Diana, the elder and more beautiful daughter, is expecting the arrival of Anthony Prather, a personable young explorer. Christian, the plain daughter, mistakes him for Tony, the mechanic, and sets him to repairing her motor boat so she can win the boat race. It develops that the real Tony is wanted for robbery, and Christian has a bad day trying to steer the unsuspecting Anthony clear of the police. When his true identity is revealed, a happy ending is found for all. A gay and delightful comedy with very interesting characters. Suitable for both high school and college.

Wetmore Declamation Bureau, Sioux City, Iowa.

Herbie and the Mumps, a comedy in one act, by Marjorie M. Williams. 3 m., 3 w. No royalty. Herbie scares his sisters' dates away by pretending he has mumps, and then discovers, to his chagrin, that he really does have them. Short and very easy.

The Bishop and the Convict, a drama in one act, by Pauline Phelps. 3 m., 2 w. No royalty. A dramatization of an incident in *Les Miserables*. Jean Valjean, the convict, steals the candlesticks of the Bishop who has fed and sheltered him. When Jean is arrested and brought back, the Bishop tells the police the candlesticks were a gift to Jean. His lie gives the convict a new start in life. Costumes of 1800.

Eddie Greets a Hero, a comedy in one act, by Kathryn Wayne. 2 m., 4 w. No royalty. Eddie rehearses the speech with which he is to greet a visiting celebrity until almost too late to get dressed to go. His efforts to get dressed in time are tragic to Eddie but amusing to others. An easy and short play. Good assembly material.

Ivan Bloom Hardin Co., 3806 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

Highest Bidder Gets a Date, a comedy in one-act, by Eileen M. Smith. 4 m., 9 w. Non-royalty. The girls' dormitory becomes a hotbed of conspiracy as soon as news is received of the appearance of four West Point cadets in town. A funny play that a large group of boys and girls can produce with ease.

Mama's Wonder Boy, a comedy in one act, by Ray Johnson. 3 m., 3 w. Non-royalty. Albert, the "wonder boy" successfully makes use of his "formula Q" to capture a gentleman crook wanted by the government. This play has excellent possibilities for amateur groups. A good choice for assembly.

Readings:

Interviewing Mark Twain. This is the well known scene in which the reporter is more than surprised by the ignorance of the great author. Excellent humorous selection.

The Prince and the Pauper, by Mark Twain. Miles Hendon is amused by the commands of the young beggar boy he has brought to his home. A scene that any audience will enjoy.

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Our Periodicals in Review

REVIEWED BY LOTTA JUNE MILLER

Articles reviewed in this department are selected for their practical value to drama teachers and students. These reviews will have achieved their purpose if they instill a desire among our readers to maintain an active acquaintance with the periodicals.

STARS OVER BROADWAY. By Grenville Vernon. *The American Mercury* for October, 1939. In contrast to our previous conception, the so-called "star system" is saving Broadway. For many years it was the common belief among producers that the "play is the thing." Now the actor has come into his own once more by claiming the honor of saving the legitimate stage. To give concrete evidence, observe last season's successes: Maurice Evans in *Hamlet* and *Henry IV.*, Raymond Massey in *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, Katharine Cornell in *No Time for Comedy*, Frederic March in *The American Way*, Walter Huston in *Knickerbocker Holiday*, and many others of note. The very star system that "made" the movies is now rejuvenating the theater because the public likes to see its favorite actors over and over again.

PAY-OFF ON ODETS. By Otis Ferguson. *New Republic* for September 27, 1939. This is the first of two articles on Clifford Odets, prominent playwright for the Group Theatre. For directors and advanced students in play writing, the criticisms of Odets' technique will prove valuable.

Fortunately he seems to have an "eye" for picking the right characters and situations and to write lines in a homely kind of poetry. In other words, he has a selective dramatic sense. His humor is never of the "gag" variety which is thrown in merely for comic relief. It seems to come from the vitality of living speech.

ODETS: II AND ET CETERA. By Otis Ferguson. *New Republic* for October 4, 1939. To continue this treatise on Odets, Mr. Ferguson says that "as far as living drama is concerned, Clifford Odets already holds a corner on the genius of serious writing for the theatre today." He draws a very interesting contrast between his *Golden Boy* on the stage and the version on the screen. Also his criticism of *Rocket to the Moon* will be interesting to those who have read or seen the play. He feels that it is one of the closest knit pieces of dramaturgy in the contemporary theater.

FIRST NIGHTS AND PASSING JUDGMENTS. By George Jean Nathan. *Esquire* for November, 1939. Students of play selection will be interested to find that the majority of plays condemned to failure by the majority of producers have been overwhelming successes. It has been generally conceded that plays about poets, death, actors, or a boring female would flop. To the contrary, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *Death Takes a Holiday*, *The Royal Family*, and *Kiss the Boys Goodbye* have proved popular not only on Broadway but on amateur stages. In other words, a director should largely disregard the common conception of what will or will not "go" and not hesitate to produce a script in which he has faith.

AMATEUR STAGE SETS. By Thomas L. Hall. *Popular Science* for February, 1939. Although this article appeared several months ago, members of stage crews will find some practical information regarding the construction of stage scenery and "props" to give that "professional look." Helpful drawings, accompanied by instructions, as well as photographs are included.

Information on how to construct a collapsible platform, doors, round scenery, distant windmills, and the like is given. You will also find good suggestions on lashing flats to-

gether, building a cannon out of a telephone pole, as well as constructing a bridge.

THE THIRTY PLAYS OF GEORGE S. KAUFMAN. By Joseph Mersand. *Players Magazine* for October, 1939. Although only fifty years old, George S. Kaufman has perhaps won more friends in the American theater audience than George Bernard Shaw has among the English at eighty-three. A native of Pittsburgh, he engaged himself in varied occupations before migrating to New York city where he eventually became dramatic editor of the *New York Times*.

Unlike many critics, he soon learned the practical side of the theater and was able to produce as well as censure. Among his notable successes are *Dulcy*, *Babbitt*, and two Pulitzer Prize winners: *Of Thee I Sing* and *You Can't Take It With You*.

Whether Kaufman has a consistent philosophy permeating his entire thirty plays is doubtful. The point is, each play does have some kind of a theme which he is able to animate with appropriate wit and satire.

PRODIGAL'S RETURN. By George Jean Nathan. *Newsweek* for September 18, 1939. Mr. Nathan brings optimistic reports for the coming season. With few exceptions, all of the more prominent playwrights in the United States and Europe have one or more scripts ready for the producers. Eugene O'Neill will remain conspicuously absent for another season while he continues work on his cycle of eight or nine plays. On the other hand, Anderson, Kaufman, Hart, and Saroyan will probably come forth with at least two shows apiece.

SIDNEY HOWARD. By Edith J. R. Isaacs. *Theatre Arts* for October, 1939. In view of the recent death of Sidney Howard, this article takes on an even greater significance than it was originally intended. Few American playwrights have enjoyed the continued success that he so rightfully earned. Among his most popular plays are *They Knew What They Wanted*, which won for him the Pulitzer Prize in 1924, *Lucky Sam McCaver*, *Ned McCobb's Daughter*, *The Silver Cord*, *The Late Christopher Bean*, *Dodsworth*, and *Yellow Jack*.

GIFT HORSE MOUTH. By George Jean Nathan. *Newsweek* for October 16, 1939. Before any Thespian Troupe, in its urge to follow the trend of the times, attempts to revive *Journey's End*, it would be well for the students and director to read Mr. Nathan's comments. Notwithstanding a less effective cast, the script itself is dated.

Similar criticism has been accorded Sidney Howard's *They Knew What They Wanted*. Mr. Nathan accuses the newspaper critics of having severe cases of "pernicious nostalgia" for encouraging a revival of these plays.

CONCENTRATION IN ACTING. By Muriel Ratcliff Bartholomew. *The Playbill* for 1939. This is an especially good article for student actors and amateur directors to read. If the director paints a vivid mental stage picture for his cast, the actors should have little difficulty in visualizing the set and costumes. Thus with the proper concentration, an actor can improve line reading and vocal inflection tremendously.

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By Tom Taggart

A rollicking comedy in which a former famous child movie star goes to college and takes along a bodyguard.

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By Philip Barry

A gay light comedy of college romance and intrigue. It reveals the gifted Philip Barry in a most amiable mood.

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By Helen Jerome

Jane Austen's most celebrated novel is here deftly dramatized with admirable authenticity to the original.

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By Frederick Jackson

One of the big comedy hits on Broadway two seasons back in which the Bishop accidentally gets mixed up in a serious hold-up and robbery.

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By Robert Sloane and Louis Pelletier, Jr.

New York success with Frank Parker in the leading role. A Brooklyn singer and guitar player obtains employment on a dude ranch in Cody, Wyoming.

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By Ian Hay

New York and London success. An amiable misogynist finds himself with three attractive young ladies on his hands.

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PURE AS THE DRIVEN

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YOU AND I

TOMMY

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BEAN

THE FAMILY UPSTAIRS

FRESH FIELDS

THE YOUNGEST

THE MILKY WAY

PEG O' MY HEART

YOURS TRULY WILLIE

LOOK WHO'S HERE

THREE-CORNERED MOON

A MURDER HAS BEEN

ARRANGED

THE PATSY

THE SHOW-OFF

ADAM AND EVE

CLARENCE

LITTLE WOMEN

THE NUT FARM

ONCE THERE WAS A

PRINCESS

TONS OF MONEY

SKIDDING

SMILIN' THROUGH

YOU'RE TELLING ME

CAPTAIN APPLEJACK

COME OUT OF THE

KITCHEN

DULCY

NOTHING BUT THE

TRUTH

THE GHOST TRAIN

LITTLE MISS FORTUNE

CHARLEY'S AUNT

MAMA'S BABY BOY

HOLIDAY

LADY OF LETTERS

DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY

WHO'S CRAZY NOW

BIG-HEARTED HERBERT

DADDY LONG LEGS

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Humorous

MID-SUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. Shakespeare. 10 min. Has won two State Contests, a Tri-State, and two National, 1938, 1939. The 1939 winner, Bob Ray from the High School at Davenport, Iowa, won our Special Award of \$50.00 for himself, and the Wetmore National Trophy and \$100.00 worth of dramatic material for his high school. 50c

DAVID GARRICK. From the play. 10 min. This cutting has won two States, an Inter-State, a National, and placed in National finals, 1938. 60c

BROTHERLY LOVE. Leota Hulse Black. 11 min. Has won seven State Contests, a Tri-State, and National. 60c

LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE. Black. 11 min. Has won six State Contests and a National. 60c

THE SCHOOL PROGRAM. J. L. Harbour. 9 min. Has won six state contests, a Tri-state, and a National. 50c

Dramatic

JEAN-MARIE. Theuriat. 10 min. From the play. Won Iowa State Contest, 1939, second in the National Contest, 1936, and first in the National, 1937. 60c

MARY STUART. 8 min. This arrangement of Schiller's drama has won seven State Contests and a National. 60c

MERCEDES. Aldrich. A cutting from the play. 12 min. Has won a State Contest and a National. 35c

Orations

THE BIG PARADE. Carty. 12 min. Has won twelve State Contests, five Tri-State, and two National, 1936, 1939. The 1939 winner, Edward Gunz of San Francisco, California, won our Special Award of \$50.00 for himself, and the Wetmore National Trophy and \$100.00 worth of dramatic material for his high school. 50c

THE SUPREME MENACE. Dunbar. 10 min. Won six State, three Tri-State, two National, 1931, 1933, and third in the National, 1939. 50c

THE MONSTER IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE. Grossman. 9 min. Won five States, an Inter-State, and the National, 1937 (in original oratory). 50c

THREE SMALL NATIONS. 50c

WILLARD WILSON. 50c

YOUTH AND WORLD PEACE. 50c

ARMAMENTS FOR PEACE. 50c

CRIME ITS OWN DETECTOR. 35c

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FOUR O'CLOCK AT THE SIP 'N' BITE. Leota Hulse Black. 10 min. 1939 reading. All the favorite Leota Hulse Black characters are included in this humorous reading. 60c

A MODERN PORTIA. Leota Hulse Black. 10 min. 1939 sequel to "X Marks the Spot". Characters: Bettina and Bill, twins, and Camille. 60c

PYGMALION AND GALATEA. Gilbert. 1939 cutting from the comedy. 10 min. Main characters: Pygmalion, his wife, and Galatea, the animated statue. 50c

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY. W. S. Gilbert. 10 min. 1939 cutting from the one-act drama. 60c

THE VIOLIN MAKER OF CREMONA. Coppee. 10 min. 1939 cutting from the play. 50c

SOME OUTSTANDING ORATIONS

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